CATHARINE FURZE

Mark Rutherford

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CATHARINE FURZE.

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CATHARINE FURZE

BY

MARK RUTHERFORD

EDITED BY HIS FRIEND

REUBEN SHAPCOTT

IN TWO VOLUMES

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T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

MDCCCXCIII

CATHARINE FURZE.

CHAPTER X.

THE reader has, doubtless, by this time judged with much severity not only Catharine, but Mr. Cardew. It is admitted to the full that they are both most unsatisfactory and most improbable. Is it likely that in a sleepy Midland town, such as Eastthorpe, knowing nothing but the common respectabilities of the middle of this century, the daughter of an ironmonger would fall in love with a married clergyman? Perhaps to their present biographer it seems more remarkable than to his readers. He remembers what the Eastern Midlands were like fifty years ago and they do not. They are thinking of Eastthorpe of the present day, of its schoolgirls who are examined in Keats

and Shelley, of the Sunday morning walks there, and of the, so to speak, smelling acquaintance with sceptical books and theories which half the population now boasts. But Eastthorpe, when Mr. Cardew was at Abchurch, was totally different. It knew what it was for parsons to go wrong. It had not forgotten a former rector and the young woman at the Bell. What talk there was about that affair! Happily his friends were well connected: they exerted themselves, and he obtained a larger sphere of usefulness two hundred miles away. Mr. Cardew, however, was not that rector, and Catharine was not the pretty waitress, and it is time now to tell the promised early history of Mr. Cardew.

He was the son of a well-to-do London merchant, who lived in Stockwell, in a large, white house, with a garden of a couple of acres, shaded by a noble cedar in its midst. There were four children, but he was the only boy. His mother belonged to an old and very religious family, and inherited all its traditions of Calvinistic piety and decorum. Her love for this boy was boundless, and she had a double ambition for him, which was

that he might become a minister of God's Word, and in due time might marry Jane Berdoe, the only daughter of the Reverend Charles Berdoe, M.A., and Euphemia, her dearest friend. Mrs. Cardew had heard so much of the contamination of boys' schools that Theophilus was educated at home and sent straight from home to Cambridge. At the University he became a member of the ultra-evangelical sect of young men there, and devoted himself entirely to theology. He thus passed through youth and early manhood without any intercourse with the world so called, and he lacked that wholesome influence which is exercised by healthy companionship with those who differ from us and are not afraid to oppose us. Of course he married Jane Berdoe. His mother was always contriving that Jane should be present when he was at home: he was young: he had never known what it was to go astray with women, and he was unable to stand at a distance from her and ask himself if he really cared for her. He fell in love with himself, married himself, and soon after discovered that he did not know who his wife was. After his marriage he became wholly unjust to

her, and allowed her defects to veil the whole of her character.

The ultra-evangelical school in the Church preserved at that time the religious life of England, although in a very strange form. They believed and felt certain vital truths, although they did not know what was vital and what was not. They had real experience, and their roots lay, not upon the surface, but went deep down to the perennial springs, and the articles of their creed became a vehicle for the expression of the most real emotions. Evangelicalism, however, to Mr. Cardew was dangerous. He was always prone to self-absorption, and the tendency was much increased by his religion. He lived an entirely interior life, and his joys and sorrows were not those of Abchurch, but of another sphere. Abchurch feared wet weather, drought, ague, rheumatism, loss of money, and, on Sundays, feared hell, but Mr. Cardew's fears were spiritual or even spectral. His self-communion produced one strange and perilous result, a habit of prolonged evolution from particular ideas uncorrected by reference to what was around him. If any-

thing struck him it remained with him, deduction followed deduction in practice unfortunately as well as in thought, and he was ultimately landed in absurdity or something worse. The wholesome influence of ordinary men and women never permits us to link conclusion to conclusion from a single premiss, or at any rate to act upon our conclusions, but Mr. Cardew had no world at Abchurch save himself. He saw himself in things, and not as they were. A sunset was just what it might happen to symbolise to him at the time, and his judgments upon events and persons were striking, but they were frequently judgments upon creations of his own imagination, and were not in the least apposite to what was actually before him. The happy, artistic, Shakespearian temper, mirroring the world like a lake, was altogether foreign to him.

When he saw Catharine a new love awoke in him instantaneously. Was it legitimate or illegitimate? In many cases of the same kind the answer would be that the question is one which cannot be put. No matter how pure the intellectual bond between man and woman may be, it is

certain to carry with it a sentiment which cannot be explained by the attraction of mere mental similarity. A man says to a man, "Do you really believe it?" and, if the answer is "yes," the two become friends; but if it is a woman who responds to him, something follows which is sweeter than friendship, whether she be bound or free. It cannot be helped; there is no reason why we should try to help it, provided only we do no harm to others, and indeed these delicate threads are the very fairest in the tissue of life. With Mr. Cardew it was a little different. Undoubtedly he was drawn to Catharine because her thoughts were his thoughts. St. Paul and Milton in him saluted St. Paul and Milton in her. But he did not know where to stop, nor could he look round and realise whither he was being led. Any other person in six weeks would have noticed the milestones on the road, and would have determined that it was time to turn, but he gaily walked forward with his head in the clouds. If anybody at that particular moment when he left the bridge could have made him comprehend that he was making love to a girl; that

what he was doing was an ordinary, commonplace criminal act, or one which would justifiably be interpreted as such, he not only would have been staggered and confounded, but would instantly have drawn back. As it was, he was neither staggered nor confounded, and went home to his wife with but one image in his brain, that of Catharine Furze.

Catharine was one of those creatures whose life is not uniform from sixteen to sixty, a simple progressive accumulation of experiences, the addition of a ring of wood each year. There had come a time to her when she had suddenly opened. The sun shone with new light, a new lustre lay on river and meadow, the stars became something more than mere luminous points in the sky, she asked herself strange questions, and she loved more than ever her long wanderings at Chapel Farm. This phenomenon of a new birth is more often seen at some epochs than at others. When a nation is stirred by any religious movement it is common, but it is also common in a different shape during certain periods of spiritual activity, such as the latter part of the eighteenth century

and the first half of the nineteenth in England and Germany. Had Catharine been born two hundred years earlier, life would have been easy. All that was in her would have found expression in the faith of her ancestors, large enough for any intellect or any heart at that time. She would have been happy in the possession of a key which unlocks the mystery of things, and there would have been ample room for emotion. How impatient she became of those bars which nowadays restrain people from coming close to one another! Often and often she felt that she could have leaped out towards the person talking to her, that she could have cried to him to put away his circumlocutions, his forms and his trivialities, and to let her see and feel what he really was. Often she knew what it was to thirst like one in a desert for human intercourse, and she marvelled how those who pretended to care for her could stay away so long: she could have humiliated herself if only they would have permitted her to love them and be near them. Poor Catharine! the world as it is now is no place for people so framed! When life runs high and takes a common form men can walk

together as the disciples walked on the road to Emmaus. Christian and Hopeful can pour out their hearts to one another as they travel towards the Celestial City and are knit together in everlasting bonds by the same Christ and the same salvation. But when each man is left to shift for himself, to work out the answers to his own problems, the result is isolation. People who, if they were believers, would find the richest gift of life in utter confidence and mutual help are now necessarily strangers. One turns to metaphysics; another to science; one takes up with Rousseau's theory of existence, and another with Kant's; they meet; they have nothing to say; they are of no use to one another in trouble; one hears that the other is sick; what can be done? There is a nurse; he does not go; his old friend dies, and as to the funeral—well, we are liable to catch cold. Not so, Christian and Hopeful! for when Christian was troubled "with apparitions of hobgoblins and evil spirits, even on the borderland of Heaven—oh, Bunyan! Hopeful kept his brother's head above water, and called upon him to turn his eyes to the Gate and the men standing by it to receive him."

My poor reader-friend, how many times have you in this nineteenth century, when the billows have gone over you—how many times have you felt the arm of man or woman under you raising you to see the shining ones and the glory that is inexpressible?

Had Catharine been born later it would have been better. She would perhaps have been able to distract herself with the thousand and one subjects which are now got up for examinations, or she would perhaps have seriously studied some science, which might at least have been effectual as an opiate in suppressing sensibility. She was, however, in Eastthorpe before the new education, as it is called, had been invented. There was no elaborate system of needle points, Roman and Greek history, plain and spherical trigonometry, political economy, ethics, literature, chemistry, conic sections, music, English history, and mental philosophy, to draw off the electricity within her, nor did she possess the invaluable privilege of being able, after studying a half-crown handbook, to unbosom herself to women of her own age upon the position of Longland as an English poet.

Shakespeare or Wordsworth might have been of some use to her, but to Shakespeare she was not led, although there was a brown, dusty, one-volume edition at the Terrace; and of Wordsworth nobody whom she knew in Eastthorpe had so much as heard. A book would have turned much that was vague in her into definite shape; it would have enabled her to recognise herself; it would have given an orthodox expression to cloudy singularity, and she would have seen that she was a part of humanity in her most extravagant and personal emotions. As it was, her position was critical because she stood by herself, affiliated to nothing, an individual belonging to no species, so far as she knew. She then met Mr. Cardew. It was through him the word was spoken to her, and he was the interpreter of the new world to her. She was in love with him—but what is love? There is no such thing: there are loves, and they are all different. Catharine's was the very life of all that was Catharine, senses, heart, and intellect, a summing-up and projection of her whole self-hood. He was more to her than she to him—was any woman ever so much to a man as a man is to

a woman? She was happy when she was near him. When she was in ordinary Eastthorpe society she felt as a pent-up lake might feel if the weight of its waters were used in threading needles, but when Mr. Cardew talked to her, and she to him, she rejoiced in the flow of all her force, and that horrible oppression in her chest vanished.

Nevertheless, the fear, the shudder, came to her and not to him; the wrench came from her and not from him. It was she and not he who watched through the night and found no motive for the day, save a dull, miserable sense that it was her duty to live through it.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was a fact, and everybody noticed it, that since the removal to the Terrace, and the alteration in their way of living, Mr. Furze was no longer the man he used to be, and seemed to have lost his grasp over his business. To begin with, he was not so much in the shop. His absences in the Terrace at meal-times made a great gap in the day, and Tom Catchpole was constantly left in sole charge. Mr. Bellamy came home one evening and told his wife that he had called at Furze's to ask the meaning of a letter Furze had signed, explaining the action of a threshing-machine which was out of order. To his astonishment Furze, who was in his counting-house, called for Tom, and said, "Here, Tom, this is one of your letters; you had better tell Mr. Bellamy how the thing works."

"I held my tongue, Mrs. Bellamy, but I had my thoughts all the same, and the next time I go there, *if* I go at all, I shall ask for Tom."

Mr. Furze was aware of Tom's growing importance, and Mrs. Furze was aware of it too. The worst of it was that Mr. Furze, at any rate, knew that he could not do without him. It is very galling to the master to feel that his power is slipping from him into the hands of a subordinate, and he is apt to assert himself by spasmodic attempts at interference which generally make matters worse and rivet his chains more tightly. There was a small factory in Eastthorpe in which a couple of grindstones were used which were turned by water-power at considerable speed. One of them had broken at a flaw. It had flown to pieces while revolving, and had nearly caused a serious accident. The owner called at Mr. Furze's to buy another. There were two in stock, one of which he would have taken; but Tom, his master being at the Terrace, strongly recommended his customer not to have that quality, as it was from the same quarry as the one which was faulty, but that another should be ordered. To this he assented.

When Mr. Furze returned Tom told him what had happened. He was in an unusually irritable, despotic mood. Mrs. Furze had forced him to yield upon a point which he had foolishly made up his mind not to concede, and consequently he was all the more disposed to avenge his individuality elsewhere. After meditating for a minute or two he called Tom from the counter.

"Mr. Catchpole, what do you mean by taking upon yourself to promise you would obtain another grindstone?"

"Mean, sir! I do not quite understand. The two out there are of the same sort as the one that broke, and I did not think them safe."

"Think, sir! What business had you to think? I tell you what it is, you are much too fond of thinking. If you would only leave the thinking to me, and do what you are told, it would be much better for you."

Tom's first impulse was to make a sharp reply, and to express his willingness to leave, but for certain private reasons he was silent. Encouraged by the apparent absence of resistance, Mr. Furze continued—

"I've meant to have a word or two with you several times. You seem to have forgotten your position altogether, and that I am master here, and not you. You, perhaps, do not remember where you came from, and what you would have been if I had not picked you up. Let there be no misunderstanding in future."

"There shall be none, sir. Shall I call at the factory and explain your wishes about the grindstone? I will tell them I was mistaken, and that they had better have one of those in stock."

"No, you cannot do that now; let matters remain as they are; I must lose the sale of the stone and put up with it."

Tom withdrew. That evening, after supper, Mr. Furze, anxious to show his wife that he possessed some power to quell opposition, told her what had happened. It met with her entire approval. She hated Tom. For all hatred, as well as for all love, there is doubtless a reason, but the reasons for the hatreds of a woman of Mrs. Furze's stamp are often obscure, and perhaps more nearly an exception than any other known fact in

nature to the rule that every effect must have a cause.

"I would get rid of him," said she. "I think that his not replying to you is ten times more aggravating than if he had gone into a passion."

"You cannot get rid of him," said Catharine.

"Cannot! What do you mean, Catharine—cannot? I like that! Do you suppose that I do not understand my own business—I who took him up out of the gutter and taught him? Cannot, indeed!"

"Of course you *can* get rid of him, father; but I would not advise you to try it."

"Now, do take *my* advice," said Mrs. Furze: "send him about his business at once, before he does any further mischief, and gets hold of your connection. Promise me."

"I will," said Mr. Furze, "to-morrow morning, the very first thing."

Morning came, and Mr. Furze was not quite so confident. Mrs. Furze had not relented, and as her husband went out at the door she reminded him of his vow.

"You will, now? I shall expect to hear when you come home that he has had notice."

"Oh, certainly he shall go, but I am doubtful whether I had better not wait till I have somebody in my eye whom I can put in his place."

"Nonsense! you can find somebody easily enough."

Mr. Furze strode into his shop looking and feeling very important. Instead of the usual kindly "Good morning," he nodded almost imperceptibly and marched straight into his counting-house. It had been his habit to call Tom in there and open the letters with him, Tom suggesting a course of action and replies. To-day he opened his correspondence in silence. It happened to be unusually bulky for a small business, and unusually important. The Honourable Mr. Eaton was about to make some important alterations in his house and grounds. New conservatories were to be built, and an elaborate system of hot water warming apparatus was to be put up both for house and garden. He had invited tenders to specification from three houses—one in London, one in Cambridge, and from Mr. Furze. Tom and Mr. Furze had gone over the specification carefully, but Tom had preceded and origi-

nated, and Mr. Furze had followed, and, in order not to appear slow of comprehension, had frequently assented when he did not understand—a most dangerous weakness. To his surprise he found that his tender of £850 was accepted. There was much work to be done which was not in his line, but had been put into his contract in order to save subdivision, and consequently arrangements had to be made with subcontractors. Materials had also to be provided at once, and there was a penalty of so much a day if the job was not completed by a certain time. He did not know exactly where to begin; he was stunned, as if somebody had hit him a blow on the head, and, after trying in vain to think, he felt that his brain was in knots. He put the thing aside, looked at his other letters, and they were worse. One of his creditors, a blacksmith, who owed him £55 for iron, had failed, and he was asked to attend a meeting of creditors. A Staffordshire firm, upon whom he had depended for pipes, in case he should obtain Mr. Eaton's order, had sent a circular announcing an advance in iron, and he forgot that in their offer their price held

good for another week. He was trustee under an old trust, upon which no action had been taken for years; he remembered none of its provisions, and now the solicitors had written to him requesting him to be present at a most important conference in London that day week. There was also a notice from the Navigation Commissioners informing him that, in consequence of an accident at one of their locks, it would be fully a fortnight before any barge could pass through, and he knew that his supply of smithery coal would be exhausted before that date, as he had refrained from purchasing in consequence of high prices. To crown everything a tap came at the door, and in walked his chief man at the foundry to announce that he would shortly leave, as he had obtained a better berth. Mr. Furze by this time was so confused that he said nothing but "Very well," and when the man had gone he leaned his head on his elbows in despair. He looked through the glass window of the counting-house and saw Tom quietly weighing some nails. He would have given anything if he could have called him in, but he could not. As to dismissing him, it was

out of the question now, and yet his sense of dependence on him excited a jealousy nearly as intense as his wife's animosity. When a man cannot submit to be helped he dislikes the benevolent friend who offers assistance worse than an avowed enemy. Mr. Furze felt as if he must at once request Tom's aid, and at the same time do him some grievous bodily harm.

The morning passed away and nothing was advanced one single step. He went home to his dinner excited, and he was dangerous. It is very trying, when we are in a coil of difficulty, out of which we see no way of escape, to hear some silly thing suggested by an outsider who perhaps has not spent five minutes in considering the case. Mrs. Furze, knowing nothing of Mr. Eaton's contract, of the blacksmith's failure, of the advance in iron, of the trust meeting, of the stoppage of the navigation, and of the departure of the foundryman, asked her husband the moment the servant had brought in the dinner and had left the room—

"Well, my dear, what did Tom say when you told him to go?"

"I haven't told him."

"Not told him, my dear! how is that?"

"I wish with all my heart you'd mind your own affairs."

"Mr. Furze! what is the matter? You do not seem to know what you are saying."

"I know perfectly well what I am saying. I wish you knew what *you* are saying. When we came up here to the Terrace—much good has it done us—I thought I should have no interference with my business. You understand nothing whatever about it, and I shall take it as a favour if you will leave it alone."

Mrs. Furze was aghast. Presently she took out her pockethandkerchief and retreated to her bedroom. Mr. Furze did not follow her, but his dinner remained untouched. When he rose to leave, Catharine went after him to the door, caught hold of his hand and silently kissed him, but he did not respond.

During the dinner-hour Tom had looked in the counting-house and saw the letters lying on the table untouched. Mr. Eaton's steward came in with congratulations that the tender was ac-

cepted, but he could not wait. As Mr. Furze passed through the shop Tom told him simply that the steward had called.

"What did he want?"

"I do not know, sir."

Mr. Furze went to his papers again and shut the door. He was still more incapable of collecting his thoughts and of determining how to begin. First of all came the contract, but before he could settle a single step the navigation presented itself. Then, without any progress, came the rise in the price of iron, and so forth. In about three hours the post would be going, and nothing was done. He cast about for some opportunity of a renewal of intercourse with Tom, and looked anxiously through his window, hoping that Tom might have some question to ask. At last he could stand it no longer, and he opened the door and called out—

"Mr. Catchpole"—not the familiar "Tom."

Mr. Catchpole presented himself.

"I wish to give you some instructions about these letters. I have arranged them in order. You will please write what I say, and I will sign

in time for the post to-night. First of all there is the contract. You had better take the necessary action and ask the Staffordshire people what advance they want."

"Yes, sir, but"—deferentially—"the Staffordshire people cannot claim an advance if you accept at once: you remember the condition?"

"Certainly; what I mean is that you can accept their tender. Then there is the meeting of creditors."

"I suppose you wish Mr. Eaton's acceptance acknowledged and the sub-contractors at once informed?"

"Of course, of course; I said necessary action—that covers everything. With regard to the creditors' meeting, my proposal is——" A pause.

"Perhaps it will be as well, sir, if you merely say you will attend."

"I thought you would take that for granted. I was considering what proposal I should make when we meet."

"Probably, sir, you can make it better after you hear his statement."

"Well, possibly it may be so; but I am always

in favour of being prepared. However, we will postpone that for the present. Then there is the trustee business. That is a private matter of my own, which you will not understand. I will give you the papers, however, and you can make an abstract of them. I cannot carry every point in my head. If you are in any doubt come to me."

"You wish me to say you will go, sir?"

"I should have thought there was no need to ask. You surely do not suppose that I am to give instructions upon every petty detail! Then about the navigation: I *must* have some coal, and that is the long and the short of it."

The "how" was probably a petty detail, for Mr. Furze went no further with the subject, and was inclined to proceed with the man at the foundry.

"It will be too late if we wait till the lock is repaired, sir. I understand it will be three weeks really. Will you write to Ditchfield and tell them five tons are to come to Millfield Sluice? We will then cart it from there. That will be the cheapest and the best way."

"Yes, I do not object; but we *must* have the coal—that is really the important point. As to Jack in the foundry, I will get somebody else. I suppose we shall have to pay more."

"How would it be, sir, if you put Sims in Jack's place, and Spurling in Sims' place? You would then only want a new labourer, and you would pay no more than you pay now. Sims, too, knows the work, and it might be awkward to have a new man at the head just now."

"Yes, that may do; but what I wish to impress on you is that the vacancy *must* be filled up. That is all, I think; you can take the letters."

Tom took them up and went to his little corner near the window to re-peruse them. There was much to be done which had not been mentioned, particularly with regard to Mr. Eaton's contract. He took out the specification, jotted down on a piece of paper the several items, marked methodically with a cross those which required prompt attention, and began to write. Mr. Furze, seeing his desk unencumbered, was very well satisfied with himself. He had "managed" the whole thing perfectly. His head became clear, the

knots were untied, and he hummed a few bars of a hymn. He then went to his safe, took out the trust papers without looking at them, handed them over to Tom with a remark that he should like the abstract the next morning, and at once went up to the Terrace. He was hungry: he had left Mrs. Furze unwell, and, in his extreme good-humour, had relented towards her. She had recovered, but did not mention again the subject of Tom's discharge. He had ham with his tea, but it was over sooner than usual, and he rose to depart.

"You are going early, father," said Catharine.

"Yes, my dear; it has been a busy day. I have been successful with my tender for Mr. Eaton's improvements; iron has advanced; the navigation has stopped; Castle, the blacksmith, has gone to smash; I have to go to a trustees' meeting under that old Fothergill trust; and Jack in the foundry has given notice to leave."

"When did you hear all this?"

"All within an hour after breakfast. I have been entirely occupied this afternoon in directing Tom what to do, and I must be off to see that

he has carried out my instructions. What a coil it is! and yet I rather like it."

Catharine reflected that her father did not seem to like it at dinner-time, and went through the familiar operation of putting two and two together. She accompanied him to the front gate, and as he passed out she said—

"You have not given Tom notice?"

"No, my dear, not yet. It would be a little inconvenient at present. I *could* do without him easily, even now; but perhaps it will be better to wait. Besides, he is a little more teachable after the talking-to I have given him."

Mr. Furze signed his letters. He did not observe that many others, of which he had not thought, remained to be written, and when Tom brought them the next day he made no remark. The assumption was that he had noticed the day before what remained to be done, saw that it was not urgent, and consented to the delay. The curious thing was that he assumed it to himself. It is a fact—not incredible to those who know that nobody, not the most accomplished master in flattery, can humbug us so completely

as we can and do humbug ourselves—that Mr. Furze, ten minutes after the letters were posted, was perfectly convinced that he had foreseen the necessity of each one—that he had personally and thoroughly controlled the whole day's operations, and that Tom had performed the duties of a merely menial clerk. As he went home he thought over Catharine's attitude with regard to Tom. She, in reality, had been anxious to protect her father; but such a motive he could not be expected to suggest to himself. A horrid notion came into his head. She might be fond of Tom! Did she not once save his life? Had she not, even when a child, pleaded that something ought to be done for him? Had she not affirmed that he was indispensable? Had she not inquired again about him that very day? Had she not openly expressed her contempt for that most eligible person, Mr. Colston? He determined to watch most strictly, and again he resolved to dismiss his assistant. A trifling increase in his attention to small matters would enable him to do this within a month or two. It would be as well for Mrs. Furze to watch

too. After supper Catharine went to bed early, and her father hung out the white flag, to which friendly response was given directly the subject of his communications was apparent. It became a basis of almost instantaneous reconciliation, and Mrs. Furze, mindful of the repulse of the brewer's son and the ruin of her own scheme thereon built, hated Tom more than ever. It was Tom, then, who had prevented admission into Eastthorpe society.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. TOM CATCHPOLE had never had any schooling. What he had learned he had learned by himself, and the books he had read were but few, and chosen rather by chance. He had never had the advantage of the common introduction to the world of ideas which is given, in a measure, to all boys who are systematically taught by teachers, and consequently, not knowing the relative value of what came before him, his perspective and proportion were incorrect. His mind, too, was essentially plain. He was perfect in his loyalty to duty; he was, as we have seen, very good in business matters, had a clear head, and could give shrewd advice upon any solid, matter-of-fact difficulty, but the spiritual world was non-existent for him. He attended chapel regularly, for he was a Dissenter, but his reasons

for going, so far as he had any, were very simple. There was a great God in heaven, against whom he had sinned and was perpetually sinning. To save himself from the consequences of his transgressions certain means were provided, and he was bound to use them. On Monday morning chapel and all thoughts connected with it entirely disappeared, but he said his prayers twice a day with great regularity. There are very few, however, of God's creatures to whom the supernatural does not in some way present itself, and no man lives by bread alone. To Tom, Catharine was miracle, soul, inspiration, religion, enthusiasm, patriotism, immortality, the fact, essentially identical, whatever we like to call it, which is not bread and yet is life. He never dared to say anything to her. He felt that she lived in a world beyond him, and he did not know what kind of a world it was. He knew that she thought about things which were strange to him, and that she was anxious upon subjects which never troubled him. She was often greatly depressed when there was no cause for depression, so far as he could see, and he could not comprehend why a person should

be ill when there was nothing the matter. If he felt unwell—a rare event with him—he always took two antibilious pills before going to bed, and was all right the next morning. He wished he himself could be ill without a reason, and then perhaps he would be able to understand Catharine better. Her elation and excitement were equally unintelligible. He once saw her sitting in her father's counting-house with a book. She was not a great reader—nobody in Eastthorpe read books, and there were not many to read—but she was so absorbed in this particular book that she did not lift her eyes from it when he came in, and it was not until her father had spoken twice to her, and had told her that he was expecting somebody, that she moved. She then ran upstairs into a storeroom, and was there for half an hour in the cold. The book was left open when she went away, and Tom looked at it. It was a collection of poems by all kinds of people, and the one over which she had been poring was about a man who had shot an albatross. Tom studied it, but could make nothing of it, and yet this was what had so much interested her! "O

God!" he said to himself, passionately, "if I could, if I did but know! She cares not a pin for me; this is what she cares for." Poor Tom! he did not pride himself on the absence of a sense in him, but knew and acknowledged to himself that he was defective. It is quite possible to be aware of a spiritual insensibility which there is no power to overcome—of the existence of a universe in which other favoured souls are able to live, one which they can report, and yet its doors are closed to us, or, if sitting outside we catch a glimpse of what is within, we have no power to utter a single sufficient word to acquaint anybody with what we have seen. Catharine respected Tom greatly, for she understood well enough what her father owed to him, but she could not love him. One penetrating word from Mr. Cardew thrilled every fibre in her, no matter what the subject might be. Tom, in every mood and on every topic, was uninteresting and ordinary. To tell the truth, plain, common probity taken by itself was not attractive to her. Horses, dogs, cows, the fields were more stimulant than perfect integrity, for she was young and did not know how precious it was; but, after

all, the reason of reasons why she did not love Tom was that she did not love him.

It was announced one day by small handbills in the shop windows that a sermon was to be preached by Mr. Cardew, of Abchurch, in Eastthorpe, on behalf of the County Infirmary, and Catharine went to hear him. It was in the evening, and she was purposely late. She did not go to her mother's pew, but sat down close to the door. To her surprise she saw Tom not far off. He was on his way to his chapel, when he noticed Catharine alone, walking towards the church, and he had followed her. Mr. Cardew took for his text the parable of the prodigal son. He began by saying that this parable had been taken to be an exhibition of God's love for man. It seemed rather intended to set forth, not the magnificence of the Divine nature, but of human nature—of that nature which God assumed. The determination on the part of the younger son to arise, to go to his father, and above everything to say to him simply "Father, I have sinned," was as great as God is great: it was God—God moving in us; in a sense it was far more truly God—far greater than the

force which binds the planets into a system. But the splendour of human nature—do not suppose any heresy here; it is Bible truth, the very gospel—is shown in the father as well as in the son. "When he was yet a great way off." We are as good as told, then, that day after day the father had been watching. How small were the probabilities that at any particular hour the son would return, and yet every hour the father's eyes were on that long, dusty road! When at last he saw what he was dying to see, what did he say? Was there a word of rebuke? He stopped his boy's mouth with kisses, and cried for the best robe and the ring and the shoes, and proclaimed a feast—the ring, mark you, a sign of honour!

> "Say nothing of pardon; the darkness hath gone:
> Shall pardon be asked for the night by the sun?
> No word of the past; of the future no fear:
> 'Tis enough, my beloved, to know thou art here."

"Oh, my friends," said the preacher, "just consider that it is this upon which Jesus, the Son of God, has put His stamp, not the lecture, not chastisement, not expiation, but an instant un-

questioning embrace, no matter what the wrong may have been. If you say this is dangerous doctrine, I say it is *here.* What other meaning can you give to it? At the same time I am astonished to find it here, astonished that priest-craft and the enemy of souls should not have erased it. Sacred truth! Is it not moving to think of all the millions of men who for eighteen hundred years have read this parable, philosophers and peasants, in every climate, and now are we reading it to-day! Is it not moving—nay, awful—to think of all the good it has done, of the sweet stream of tenderness, broad and deep, which has flowed down from it through all history? History would all have been different if this parable had never been told."

Mr. Cardew paused, and after his emotion had a little subsided he concluded by an appeal on behalf of the infirmary. He inserted a saving clause on Christ's mediatorial work, but it had no particular connection with the former part of his discourse. It was spoken in a different tone, and it satisfied the congregation that they had really heard nothing heterodox.

Tom watched Catharine closely. He noted her eager, rapt attention, and that she did not recover herself till the voluntary was at an end. He went out after her; she met Mr. and Mrs. Cardew at the churchyard gates; he saw the excitement of all three, and he saw Catharine leave her friends at the Rectory, for they were evidently going to stay the night there. Mrs. Cardew went into the house first, but Catharine turned down Fosbrooke Street, a street which did not lead, save by a very round-about way, to the Terrace. Presently Mr. Cardew came out and walked slowly down Rectory Lane. In those days it was hardly a thoroughfare. It ended at the river bank, and during daylight a boat was generally there, belonging to an old, super-annuated boatman, who carried chance passengers over to the mill meadows and saved them a walk if they wanted to go that side of the town. A rough seat had been placed near the boat moorings for the convenience of the ferryman's customers. At this time in the evening the place was deserted. Tom followed Mr. Cardew, and presently overtook him. Mr. Cardew and he knew one another slightly, for there were few persons for miles round who did not now and then visit Mr. Furze's shop.

"Good evening, Mr. Cardew."

"Ah! Mr. Catchpole, is that you? What are you doing here?"

"I have been to hear you preach, sir, and I thought I would have a stroll before I went home."

"I thought I should like a stroll too."

The two went on together, and sat down on the seat. The moon had just risen, nearly full, sending its rays obliquely across the water, and lighting up the footpath which went right and left along the river's edge. Mr. Cardew seemed disinclined to talk, was rather restless, and walked backwards and forwards by the bank. Tom reflected that he might be intruding, but there was something on his mind, and he did not leave. Mr. Cardew sat down again by his side. They both happened to be looking in the same direction eastwards at the same moment.

"If that lady thinks to cross to-night," said Tom, "she's mistaken. I'd take her over myself, though it is Sunday, if the boat were not locked."

"What lady?" asked Mr. Cardew—as if he were frightened, Tom thought.

"The lady coming down there just against the willow."

Mr. Cardew was short-sighted, and could not see her. He made as if he would go to meet her, but he stopped, returned, and remained standing. The figure approached, but before Tom could discern anything more than that it was a woman, it disappeared behind the hedge up the little by-path that cut off the corner into Rectory Lane.

"She's gone," said Tom. "I suppose she was not coming here after all."

"Which way has she gone?" asked Mr. Cardew, looking straight on the ground and scratching it with his stick.

"Into the town."

"I must be going, I think, Mr. Catchpole; good-night."

"I'll walk with you as far as your door, sir. There's something I want to say to you."

Mr. Cardew did not reply, and meditated for a moment.

"It is a lovely evening. We will sit here a little longer. What is it?"

"Mr. Cardew, as I said, I have been to hear you

preach, and I thank you with all my heart for your sermon, but I want to ask you something about it. What you said about the Mediator was true enough, but somehow, sir, I feel as if I ought to have liked the first part most, but I couldn't, and perhaps the reason is that it was poetry. Oh, Mr. Cardew, if you could but tell me how to like poetry!"

"I am afraid neither I nor anybody else can teach you that; but why are you anxious to like it? Why are you dissatisfied with yourself?"

"I do not think I am stupid. When I am in the shop I know that I am more than a match for most persons, and yet, Mr. Cardew, there are some people who seem to me to have something I have not got, and they value it more than anything besides, and they have nothing to say really, *really*, I mean, to those who have not got it, although they are kind to them."

"It is not very easy to understand what you mean."

"Well, now to-night, sir, when you talked about God moving in us, and the force which binds the planets together, and all that, I am sure you felt it,

and I am sure it is true, and yet I was out of doors, so to speak."

"Perhaps I may be peculiar, and it is you who are sane and sound."

"Ah, Mr. Cardew, if you were alone in it, and everybody were like me, that might be true, but it is not so; it is I who am alone."

"Who cares for it whom you know? You are under a delusion.'

"Oh, no, I am no Why there—there." Tom stopped.

"There was what?"

"There was Miss Furze—she took it in."

"Indeed!" Mr. Cardew again looked straight on the ground, and again scratched it with his stick. It was a night of nights, dying twilight long lingering in the north-west, the low golden moon, the slow, placid, shining stream, perfect stillness. Tom was not very susceptible, but even he was overcome and tempted into confidence.

"Mr. Cardew, you are a minister, and I may tell you: I know you will not betray me. I love Miss Furze; I cannot help it. I have never loved any girl before. It is very foolish, for I am only

her father's journeyman ; but that might be got over. She would not let that stand in her way, I am sure. But, Mr. Cardew, I am not up to her ; she is strange to me. If I try to mention her subjects, what I say is not right, and when I drove her home from Chapel Farm, and admired the view I know she admired, she directly began to speak about business, as if she did not wish to talk about better things ; perhaps it is because I never was taught. I had no schooling ; cannot you help me, sir? I shall never set eyes on anybody like her. I would die this instant to save her a moment's pain."

Mr. Cardew was silent. It was characteristic of him that often when he himself was most personally affected, the situation became an object of reflection. What a strange pathos there was in this recognition of superiority and in the inability to rise to it and appropriate it! Then his thoughts turned to himself again, and the flame shot up clear and strong, as if oil had been poured on the fire. She understood him ; she alone.

" I am very sorry for you, Mr. Catchpole, more sorry than I can tell you. I will think over what

you have said, and we will have another talk about it. I must be going now."

Mr. Cardew, however, did not go towards Rectory Lane, but along the side path. Tom mechanically accompanied him, but without speaking. At last Mr. Cardew, finding that Tom did not leave him, retraced his steps and went up the lane. In about two minutes they met Mrs. Cardew.

"I wondered where you were. I was coming down to the ferry to look for you, thinking that most likely you were there. Ah, Mr. Catchpole! is that you? I am glad my husband has had company. Let me go back and look at the water."

"Certainly."

Tom stopped and took his leave.

The two went back to the river and sat on the seat.

Mrs. Cardew took her husband's hand in her own sweet way, kissed it, and held it fast. At last, with a little struggle, she said—

"My dear, you have never preached—to me, at least—as you have preached to-night."

"You really mean it?"

She kissed his hand again, and leaned her head on his shoulder. That was her reply. He clasped her tenderly, fervently, more than fervently, and yet! while his mouth was on her neck, and his arms were round her body, the face of Catharine presented itself, and it was not altogether his wife whom he caressed.

Meanwhile Tom, pursuing his way homewards, overtook Miss Furze, to his great surprise.

"Tom, where have you been?"

"I have just left Mr. and Mrs. Cardew."

Catharine, on her way home, hesitating—for it was Catharine whom Tom and Mr. Cardew saw—had met Mrs. Cardew just about to leave the house.

"Why, Catharine! you here?"

"I was tempted by the night."

"Catharine, did you ever hear my husband preach better than he did to-night?"

"Never!"

"I was so proud of him, and I was so happy, because just what touched him touched me too. Come back with me: I know he has gone to the ferry."

"No, thank you ; it is late."

"I am sure he will see you home."

"I am sure he shall not. What! walk up to the Terrace after a day's hard work!"

So they parted. What had passed between Catharine and Mrs. Cardew when they lingered behind at the Rectory gate, God and they only know, but what we call an accident prevented their meeting. Accident! my friend Reuben told me the other day his marriage was an accident. The more I think about accidents, the less do I believe in them. By chance he had an invitation to go to Shott Woods one afternoon, and there he saw the girl who afterwards became his wife and the mother of children with a certain stamp upon them. They in turn will have other children, all of them moulded after a fashion which would have been different if his wife had been another woman. Nay, *these* children would not have existed if this particular marriage had not taken place. Thus the whole course of history is altered, because of that little note and a casual encounter. But, putting aside the theory of a God who ordains results absolutely inevitable, although to us it

seems as if they might have been different, it may be observed that the attraction which drew Reuben to his dear Camilla was not quite fortuitous. What decided her to go? It was perfect autumn weather; it was just the time of year she most loved; there would be no crowding or confusion, for many people had gone away to the seaside, and so she was delighted at the thought of the picnic. What decided him to go? The very same reasons. They had both been to Shott during the season, and he had talked and laughed there with some delightful creatures before she crossed his path and held him for ever. Why had he waited? Why had she waited? We have discarded Providence as our forefathers believed in it; but nevertheless there is a providence without the big P, if we choose so to spell it, and yet surely deserving it as much as the Providence of theology, a non-theological Providence which watches over us and leads us. It appears as instinct prompting us to do this and not to do that, to decide this way or that way when we have no consciously rational ground for decision, to cleave to this person and shun the

other, almost before knowing anything of either: it has been recognised in all ages under various forms as Demon, Fate, or presiding Genius. But still further. Suppose they both went to Shott Woods idly; suppose—which was not the case—they had never heard of one another before, is it not possible that they were brought together by a law as unevadable as gravity? There would be nothing more miraculous in such attraction than there is in that thread which the minutest atom of gas in the Orion nebula extends across billions of miles to the minutest atom of dust on the road under my window. However, be all this as it may, it would be wrong to say that the meeting between Catharine and Mr. Cardew was prevented by accident. She loitered: she went up Fosbrooke Street: if she had gone straight to Mr. Cardew she might have been with him before Tom met him. Tom would not have interrupted them, for he ventured to speak to Mr. Cardew merely because he was alone, and Mrs. Cardew would not have interrupted them, for they would have gone further afield. Tom's appearance even was not an accident, but a thread carefully woven, one may say, in the web that night.

"I saw you at church to-night, Miss Catharine," said Tom, as they walked homewards.

"Why did you go? You do not usually go to church."

"I thought I should like to hear Mr. Cardew, and I am very glad I went."

"Are you? What did you think of him? Did you like him?"

"Oh, yes; it was all true; but what he said about Christ the Mediator was so clearly put."

"You did not care for the rest then?"

"I did indeed, Miss Catharine, but it is just the same with our minister: I get along with him so much better when he seems to follow the catechism, but"—he looked up in her face—"I know that is not what you cared for. Oh, Miss Catharine," he cried suddenly, and quite altering his voice and manner, "I do not know when I shall have another chance; I hardly dare tell you; you won't spurn me, will you? My father was a poor workman; I was nothing better, and should have been nothing better if it had not been for you; all my schooling almost I have done myself; I know nothing compared with what you

know; but, Miss Catharine, I love you to madness: I have loved no woman but you; never looked at one, I may say. Do you remember when you rode home with me from Chapel Farm? I have lived on it ever since. You are far above me: things come and speak to you which I don't see. If you would teach me I should soon see them too."

Catharine was silent, and perfectly calm. At last she said—

"My dear Tom."

Tom shuddered at the tone.

"No, Miss Catharine, don't say it now; think a little; don't cast me off in a moment."

"My dear Tom, I may as well say it now, for what I ought to say is as clear as that moon in the sky. I can *never* love you as a wife ought to love her husband."

"Oh, Miss Catharine! you despise me, you despise me! Why in God's name?" Tom rose above himself, and became such another self that Catharine was amazed and half staggered. "Why in God's name did He make you and me after such a fashion, that you are the one person in the

world able to save me, and you cannot! Why did He do this! Why did He put me where I saw you every day and torment me with the hope of you, knowing that you would have nothing to do with me! He maimed my father and made him a beggar: He prevented me from learning what would have made me fit for you, and then He drove me to worship you. Do not say 'never'!"

They were close to her father's door at the Terrace. She stopped, looked at him sadly, but decisively, straight in the face, and said—

"Never! never! Never your lover, but your best friend for ever," and she opened the gate and disappeared.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. and Mrs. Furze were not disturbed because their daughter was late. A neighbour told them that she had gone to the Rectory with Mr. and Mrs. Cardew, and Mrs. Furze was pleased that Eastthorpe should behold her daughter apparently on intimate terms with a clergyman so well known and so respectable. But it was ten o'clock, and they wished to be in bed. Mrs. Furze had gone to the window, and had partly pushed aside the blind, watching till Catharine should appear. Just as the clock struck she saw Catharine approaching with somebody whom she of course took for Mr. Cardew. The pair came nearer, and, to her astonishment, she recognised Tom. Nay more, she saw the couple halt near the gate, and that Tom was speaking very earnestly. Mrs. Furze was so absorbed

that she did not recover herself until the interview was at an end, and before she could say a word to her husband, who was asleep in the arm-chair, her daughter was at the door. Mrs. Furze went to open it.

"Why, Catharine, that surely wasn't Tom!"

"Yes, it was, mother. Why not?"

"To-om!" half shrieked Mrs. Furze.

"Yes, Tom: I suppose father has gone to bed? Good-night mother," and Catharine kissed her on the forehead and went upstairs.

Mrs. Furze shut the door and rushed into the room.

"My dear! my dear!" shaking him, "Catharine has come, and Tom brought her, and they stood ever so long talking to one another."

Mr. Furze roused himself and took a little brandy-and-water.

"Rubbish!"

"Rubbish! it's all very well for you to say rubbish' when you've been snoring there!"

"Well, where is she? Make her come in; let us hear what she has to say."

"She's gone to bed. Now take my advice:

don't speak to her to-night, but wait till to-morrow; you know what she is, and you had better think a bit."

Mrs. Furze, notwithstanding her excitement, dreaded somewhat attacking Catharine without preparation.

"There's no mistake about it," observed Mr. Furze, rousing himself, "that I have had my suspicions of Master Tom, but I never thought it would come to this; nor that Catharine would have anything to say to him. It was she, though, who said I could not do without him."

"It was she," added Mrs. Furze, "who always stuck out against our coming up here, and was rude to Mrs. Colston and her son. I do not blame her so much, though, as I do that wretch of a Catchpole. What he wants is plain enough: he'll marry her and have the business, the son of a blind beggar who used to go on errands! Oh me! to think it has come to this, that my only child should be the wife of a pauper's son, and we've struggled so hard! What will the Colstons say, and all the church folk, and all the town, for the matter of that!"

Here Mrs. Furze threw herself down in a chair and became hysterical. Poor woman! she really cared for Catharine, loved her in a way, and was horrified for her sake at the supposed engagement, but her desire for her daughter's welfare was bound up with a desire for her own, a strand of one interlaced with a strand of the other, so that they could not be separated. It might be said that the union of the two impulses was even more intimate, that it was like a mixture of two liquids. There was no conflict in her. She was not selfish at one moment, and unselfishly anxious for her child the next; but she was both together at the same instant, the particular course on which she might determine satisfying both instincts.

Mr. Furze unfastened his wife's gown and stay-laces and gave her a stimulant. Presently, after directing him with a gasp to open the window, she recovered herself.

"I'll discharge Mr. Tom at once," said her husband, "and tell him the reason."

"Now, don't be stupid, Furze; pull down that blind, will you? Fancy leaving it up, and the moon staring straight down upon me half un-

dressed! Don't you admit anything of the kind to Tom. I would not let him believe you could suspect it. Besides, if you were to dismiss him for such a reason as that, you would make Catharine all the more obstinate, and the whole town would hear of it, and we should perhaps be laughed at, and lots of people would take Tom's part and say we might go further and fare worse, and were stuck up, and all that, for we must remember that all the Furzes were of humble origin, and Eastthorpe knows it. No, no, we will get rid of Tom, but it shall not be because of Catharine—something better than that—you leave it to me."

"Well, how about Catharine?"

"We will have her in to-morrow morning, when we are not so flurried. I always like to talk to her just after breakfast if there is anything wrong; but do not you say a word to Tom."

Mrs. Furze took another sip of the brandy-and-water and went to bed. Mr. Furze shut the window, mixed a little more brandy-and-water, and, as he drank it, reflected deeply. Most vividly did that morning come back to him when he had once before decided to eject Mr. Catchpole.

"I do not know how it is with other people," he groaned, "but whenever I have settled on a thing something is sure to turn up against it, and I never know what to be at for the best. My head, too, is not quite what it used to be. Half a dozen worries at once do muddle me. If they would but come, one up and one down, nobody could beat me." He took another sip of the brandy-and-water. "Want of practice—that's all. I have been an idiot to let him do so much. He shall go;" and Mr. Furze put out the candles.

Catharine was down before either her father or mother, and stood at the window reading when her father came in. She bade him good morning and kissed him, but he was ill at ease, and pretended to look for something on the side-table. He felt he was not sufficiently supported by the main strength of his forces; he was afraid to speak, and he retreated to his bedroom, sitting down disconsolately on a rush-bottom chair whilst his wife dressed herself.

"She's there already," he said.

"Then it is as well you came back."

"I think you had better begin with her; you

are her mother, and we will wait till breakfast is over. Perhaps she will say something to us. How had we better set about it?"

"I shall ask her straight what she means."

"How shall we go on then?"

"How shall we go on then? What! won't *you* have a word to put in about her marrying a fellow like that, your own servant with such a father? And how are they to live, pray? Am I to have him up here to tea with us, and is Phœbe to answer the front door when they knock, and is she to wait upon him, *him* who always goes down the area steps to the kitchen? I do not believe Phœbe would stop a month, for with all her faults she does like a respectable family. And then, if they go to church, are they to have our pew, and is Mrs. Colston to call on me and say, 'How is Catharine, and how is your *son-in-law?*' And then—oh dear, oh dear!—is his father to come here too, and is Catharine to bring him, and is he to be at the wedding breakfast? And perhaps Mrs. Colston will inquire after him too. But there, I shall not survive *that!* Oh! Catharine, Catharine!"

Mrs. Furze dropped on the chair opposite the looking-glass, for she was arranging her back hair while this monologue was proceeding, although the process was interrupted here and there when her emotions got the better of her. Her hair fell into confusion again, and it seemed as if she would again be upset even at that early hour. Her husband gave her a smelling-bottle, and she slowly recommenced her toilette.

"Would it not," he said, "be as well to try and soften her a bit, and remind her of her duty to her parents?"

"You might finish up with that, but I don't believe she'd care; and what are we to do if she owns it all and sticks out—that's what I want to know?"

Mr. Furze was silent.

"There you sit, Furze; you *are* provoking! Pick up that hairpin, will you? You always sit and sit whenever there's any difficulty. You never go beyond what I have in my own head, and when I *do* stir you up to think it is sure to be something of no use."

"I'll do anything you want," said the pensive

husband, as his wife rose and put on her cap. "I've told you before I'll get rid of Tom, and then perhaps it will all come round!"

"At it again! What *did* I tell you last night?—and yet you go on with your old tune. All come round, indeed! Would it! She's your daughter, but you don't know her as I do."

Here there came a tap at the door. It was Phœbe: Miss Catharine sent her to say it was a quarter-past eight: should she make the coffee?

"Look at that!" said Mrs. Furze: "shall she make the coffee!—after what has happened! That's the kind of girl she is. It strikes me you had better have nothing to do with her and leave her to me."

Phœbe tapped again.

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Furze. "I'll begin," she added to her husband, "by letting her know that at least I am not dead."

"Well, we'd better go. You just tackle her, and I'll chime in."

The couple descended, but their plan of campaign was not very clearly elaborated, and even the one or two lines of assault which Mrs. Furze

had prepared turned out to be useless. It is all very well to decide what is to be done with a human being if the human being will but comport himself in a fairly average manner, but if he will not the plan is likely to fail.

Mr. Furze was very restless during his meal. He went to the window two or three times, and returned with the remark that it was going to be wet; but the observation was made in a low, mumbling tone. Mrs. Furze was also fidgety, and, in reply to her daughter's questions, complained of headache, and wondered that Catharine could not see that she had had no sleep. At last the storm broke.

"Catharine," said Mrs. Furze, "it *was* Tom, then, who came home with you last night."

"It was Tom, mother."

"Tom! What do you mean, child? How—how did he—where did you meet him?"

Mr. Furze retired from the table, where the sun fell full upon him, and sat in the easy-chair, where he was more in the shade.

"He overtook me somewhere near the Rectory."

"Now, Catharine, don't answer your mother like

that," interposed Mr. Furze; "you know what you heard, or might have heard, last Sunday morning, that prevarication is very much like a lie; why don't you speak out the truth?"

Catharine was silent for a moment.

"I have answered exactly the question mother asked."

"Catharine, you know perfectly well what I mean," said Mrs. Furze; "what is the use of pretending you do not! Tom would never dare to walk with you in a public street, and at night, too, if there were not something more than you like to say. Tom Catchpole! whose father sold laces on the bridge; and to think of all we have done for you, and the money we have spent on you, and the pains we have taken to bring you up respectably! I will not say anything about religion, and all that, for I daresay that is nothing to *you*, but you might have had some consideration for your mother, especially in her weak state of health, before you broke her heart, and yet I blame myself, for you always had low tastes—going to Bellamy's, and consorting with people of that kind rather than with your mother's friends. Do you

suppose Mrs. Colston will come near us again! And it all comes of trying to do one's best, for there's Carry Hawkins, only a grocer's daughter, who never had a sixpence spent on her compared with what you have, and she is engaged to Carver, the doctor at Cambridge. Oh, it's a serpent's tooth, it is, and if we had never scraped and screwed for you, and denied ourselves, but left you to yourself, you might have been better; oh dear, oh dear!"

Catharine held her tongue. She saw instantly that if she denied any engagement with Tom she would not be believed, and that in any case Tom would have to depart. Moreover, one of her defects was a certain hardness to persons for whom she had small respect, and she did not understand that just because Mrs. Furze was her mother she owed her at least a deference, and, if possible, a tenderness due to no other person. However weak, foolish, and even criminal parents may be, a child ought to honour them as Moses commanded, for the injunction is, and should be, entirely unconditional.

"Catharine," said Mr. Furze, "why do you not answer your mother?"

"I cannot; I had better leave."

She opened the door and went to her room. After she had left further debate arose, and three points were settled: First, that no opposition should be offered to a visit to Chapel Farm, which had been proposed for the next day, as she would be better at the Farm than at the Terrace; secondly, that Tom and she were in love with one another; and thirdly, that not a word should be said to Tom. "Leave that to me," said Mrs. Furze again. Although she saw nothing distinctly, a vague, misty hope dawned upon her, the possibility of something she could not yet discern, and, notwithstanding the blow she had received, she was decidedly more herself within an hour after breakfast than she had been during the twelve hours preceding.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN Mr. Furze's establishment was a man who went by the name of Orkid Jim, "Orkid" signifying the general contradictoriness and awkwardness of his temper. He had a brother who was called Orkid Joe, in the employ of a builder in the town, but it was the general opinion that Orkid Jim was much the orkider of the two. He was a person with whom Mr. Furze seldom interfered. He was, it is true, a good workman in the general fitting department, in setting grates, and for jobs of that kind, but he was impertinent and disobedient. Mr. Furze, however, tolerated his insults, and generally allowed him to have his own way. He was not only afraid of Orkid Jim, but he was a victim to that unhappy dread of a quarrel which is the torment and curse of weak minds. It is, no doubt, very horrible to see a man trample

upon opinions and feelings as easily and carelessly as he would upon the grass, and go on his way undisturbed, but it is more painful to see faltering, trembling incapacity for self-assertion, especially before subordinates. Mr. Furze could not have suffered more than two or three days' inconvenience if Orkid Jim had been discharged, but a vague terror haunted him of something which might possibly happen. Partly this distressing weakness is due to the absence of a clear conviction that we are right; it is an intellectual difficulty; but frequently it is simple mushiness of character, the same defect which tempts us, when we know a thing is true, to whittle it down if we meet with opposition, and to refrain from presenting it in all its sharpness. Cowardice of this kind is not only injustice to ourselves, but to our friends. We inflict a grievous wrong by compromise. We are responsible for what we see, and the denial or the qualification should be left to take care of itself. Our duty is, if possible, to give a distinct outline to what we have in our mind. It is easy to say we should not be obstinate, pig-headed, and argue for argument's sake. That is true, just as much as

every half truth is true, but the other half is also true.

Mr. Furze, excepting when he was out of temper, never stood up to Orkid Jim. He needed the stimulus of passion to do what ought to have been done by reason, and when we cannot do what is right save under the pressure of excitement it is generally misdone. Orkid Jim had a great dislike to Tom, which he took no pains to conceal. It was difficult to ascertain the cause, but partly it was jealousy. Tom had got before him. This, however, was not all. It was a case of pure antipathy, such as may often be observed amongst animals. Some dogs are the objects of special hatred by others, and are immediately attacked by them, before any cause of offence can possibly have been given.

Jim had called at the Terrace on the morning after the explosion with Catharine. He came to replace a cracked kitchen boiler, and Mrs. Furze, for some reason or other, felt inclined to go down into the kitchen and have some talk with him. She knew how matters stood between him and Tom.

"Well, Jim, how are you getting on now? I have not seen you lately."

"No, marm, I ain't one as comes to the front much now."

"What do you mean? I suppose you might if you liked. I am sure Mr. Furze values you highly."

Jim was cautious and cunning; not inclined to commit himself. He consequently replied by an "Ah," and knocked with great energy at the brickwork from which he was detaching the range.

"Anything been the matter, then, Jim?"

"No, marm; nothing's the matter."

"You have not quarrelled with Mr. Furze, I hope? You do not seem quite happy."

"Me quarrel with Mr. Furze, marm!—no, I never quarrel with *him*. He's a gentleman, he is."

Mrs. Furze was impatient. She wanted to come to the point, and could not wait to manœuvre.

"I am afraid you and Tom do not get on together."

"Well, Mrs. Furze, if we don't it ain't my fault."

"No, I dare say not; in fact, I am sure it is not. I dare say Tom is a little overbearing. Consider-

ing his origin, and the position he now occupies, it is natural he should be."

"He ain't one as ought to give himself airs, marm. Why——"

Jim all at once dropped his chisel and his mask of indifference and flashed into ferocity.

"Why, my father was a tradesman, he was, and I was in your husband's foundry earning a pound a week when Master Tom was in rags. Who taught him, I should like to know?"

"Jim, you must not talk like that; although, to tell you the truth, Tom is no favourite of mine. Mr. Furze, however, relies on him."

"Relies on him, does he? Leastways, I know he does; just as if scores of others couldn't do jist as well, only they 'aven't 'ad his chance! Relies on him, as yer call it! But there, if I wur to speak, wot 'ud be the use?"

It is always a consolation to incapable people that their lack of success is due to the absence of chances. From the time of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—who accused Moses and Aaron of taking too much upon themselves, because every man in the congregation was as holy as his God-

selected leaders — it has been a theory, one may even say a religion, with those who have been passed over, that their sole reason for their supersession is an election as arbitrary as that by the Antinomian deity, who, out of pure wilfulness, gives opportunities to some and denies them to others.

"What do you mean, Jim? What is it that you see?"

"You'll excuse me, missus, if I says no more. I ain't a-goin' to meddle with wot don't concern me, and get myself into trouble for nothing: wot for, I should like to know? Wot good would it do me?"

"But, Jim, if you are aware of anything wrong it is your duty to report it."

"Maybe it is, maybe it isn't; but wot thanks should I get?"

"You would get my thanks and the thanks of Mr. Furze, I am sure. Look here, Jim." Mrs. Furze rose and shut the kitchen door. Phœbe was upstairs, but she thought it necessary to take every precaution. "I know you may be trusted, and therefore I do not mind speaking

to you. Tom's conduct has not been very satisfactory of late. I need not go into particulars, but I shall really be glad if you will communicate to me anything you may observe which is amiss. You may depend upon it you shall not suffer."

She put two half-crowns into Jim's hand. He turned and looked at her with one eye partly shut, and a curious expression on his face—half smile, half suspicion. He then looked at the money for a few seconds and put it deliberately in his pocket, but without any sign of gratitude.

"I'll bear wot you say in mind," he replied.

At this instant the kitchen door opened, and Phœbe entered. Mrs. Furze went on with the conversation immediately, but it took a different turn.

"How do you think the old boiler became cracked?"

He was taken aback; his muddled brain did not quite comprehend the situation, but at last he managed to stammer out that he did not know, and Mrs. Furze retired.

Jim was very slow in arranging his thoughts, especially after a sudden surprise. A shock, or

a quick intellectual movement on the part of anybody in contact with him, paralysed him, and he recovered and extended himself very gradually. Presently, however, his wits returned, and he concluded that the pretext of the shop and business mismanagement was but very partially the cause of Mrs. Furze's advances. He knew that although Mr. Furze was restive under Tom's superior capacity, there was no doubt whatever of his honesty and ability. Besides, if it was business, why did the mistress interfere? Why did she thrust herself upon him?—"coming down 'ere a purpose," thought Mr. Orkid Jim. "No, no, it ain't business," and, delighted with his discovery so far, and with the conscious exercise of mental power, he smote the bricks with more vigour than ever.

"Good-bye, Phœbe," said Catharine, looking in at the door.

"Good-bye, Miss," said Phœbe, running out; "hope you'll enjoy yourself: I wish I were going with you."

"Where is she a-goin'?" asked Jim, when Phœbe returned.

"Chapel Farm."

"Oh, is she? Wot, goin' there agin! She's oftener there than here. Not much love lost 'twixt her and the missus, is there?"

Phœbe was uncommunicative, and went on with her work.

"I say, Phœbe, has Catchpole been up here lately?"

"Why do you want to know? What is it to you?"

"Now, my beauty, wot is it to me? Why, in course it's nothin' to me; but you know he's been here."

"Well, then, he hasn't."

Phœbe, going to bed, had seen Tom and Catharine outside the gate.

"Wy, now, I myself see'd 'im out the night afore last, and I'd swear he come this way afore he went home."

"He did not come in; he only brought Miss Catharine back from church: she'd gone there alone."

Jim dropped his chisel. The three events presented themselves together—Tom's escort of

Catharine, the interview with Mrs. Furze, and the departure to Chapel Farm. He was excited, and his excitement took the form of a sudden passion for Phœbe.

"You're ten times too 'ansom for that chap," he cried, and, turning suddenly, he caught her with one arm round her waist. She strove to release herself with great energy, and in the struggle he caught his foot in his tool basket and fell on the floor, cutting his head severely with a brick. Phœbe was out of the kitchen in an instant.

"You damned cat!" growled he, "I'll be even with you and your Master Tom! I know all about it now."

CHAPTER XV.

AS Jim walked home to his dinner he became pensive. He was under a kind of pledge to his own hatred and to Mrs. Furze to produce something against Tom, and he had nothing. Even he could see that to make up a charge would not be safe. It required more skill than he possessed. The opportunity, however, very soon came. Destiny delights in offering to the wicked chances of damning themselves. It was a few days before the end of the quarter. The builder—in whose service Jim's brother, Joe, was—sent Joe to pay a small account for ironmongery, which had been due for some weeks. When he entered the shop Tom was behind his desk, and Jim was taking some instructions about a job. Mr. Furze was out. Joe produced his bill, threw it across to Tom, and pulled the money out of

his pocket. It was also market day; the town was crowded, and just at that moment Mr. Eaton drove by. Tom looked out of the window on his left hand and saw the horse shy at something in the cattle pens, pitching Mr. Eaton out. Without saying a word he rushed round the counter and out into the street, the two men, who had not seen the accident, thinking he had gone to speak to Mr. Eaton. He was absent some minutes.

"A nice sort of a chap, this," said Jim; "he's signed your bill, and he ain't got the money."

"S'pose I must wait, then."

"Look 'ere, Joe: don't you be a b——y fool! You take your account. If he writes his name afore he's paid, that's *his* look-out."

Joe hesitated.

"Wot are you a-starin' at? You've got the receipt, ain't yer? Isn't that enough? You ain't a-robbin' of him, for you never giv him the money, and I tell yer agin as he's the one as ought to lose if he don't look sharp arter people. That's square enough, ain't it?"

Joe had a remarkably open mind to reasoning

of this description, and, without another word, he took up the bill and was off. Jim also thought it better to return to the foundry. Mr. Eaton, happily, was not injured, for he fell on a truss of straw, but the excitement was great; and, when Tom returned, Joe's visit completely went out of his head, and did not occur to him again, for two or three customers were waiting for him, and, as already observed, it was market day.

Now, it was Mr. Furze's practice always to make out his accounts himself. It was a pure waste of time, for he would have been much better employed in looking after his men, and any boy could have transcribed his ledger. But no, it was characteristic of the man that he preferred this occupation—that he took the utmost pains to write his best copybook hand, and to rule red-ink lines with mathematical accuracy. Two days after the quarter a bill went to the builder, beginning, "To account delivered." The builder was astonished, and instantly posted down to the shop, receipt in hand, signed, "For J. Furze, T. C." Mr. Furze looked at his ledger again called for the day-book, found no entry, and then

sent for Tom. The history of that afternoon flashed across him in an instant.

"That's your signature, Mr. Catchpole," said Mr. Furze.

"Yes, sir."

"But here's no entry in the day-book, and, what's more, there weren't thirty shillings that night in the till."

"I cannot account for it, unless I signed the receipt before I had the money. It was just when Mr. Eaton's accident happened, and I ran out of the shop while Joe was waiting. When I came back he had gone."

"Which is as much as to say," said the builder, "that Joe's a thief. You'd better be careful, young man."

"Well, Mr. Humphries," said Mr. Furze, loftily, "we will not detain you: there is clearly a mistake somewhere; we will credit you at once with the amount due for the previous quarter, and if you will give me your account I will correct it now."

Mr. Furze took it, and ruled through the first line, altering the total.

"This is very unpleasant, Mr. Catchpole," ob-

served Mr. Furze, after the builder had departed. "Was there anybody in the shop besides yourself and Joe?"

"Jim was there."

Mr. Furze rang a bell, and Jim presently appeared.

"Jim, were you in the shop when your brother came to pay Mr. Humphries' bill about a week ago?"

"I wor."

"Did he pay it? did you see him hand over the money?"

"I did, and Mr. Catchpole took it and put it in the till. I see'd it go in with my own eyes."

"Well, what happened then?"

"He locked the till all in a hurry, put the key in his waistcoat pocket; let me see, it wor in his left-hand pocket—no, wot am I a-sayin'?—it wor in his right-hand pocket—I want to be particklar, Mr. Furze—and then he run out of the shop. Joe, he took up his receipt, and he says, says he, 'He might a given me the odd penny,' and says I, 'He ain't Mr. Furze, he can't give away none of the

guvnor's money.' If it wor the guvnor himself he'd a done it, and with that we went out of the shop together."

"That will do, Jim; you can go."

"Mr. Catchpole, this assumes a very—I may say—painful aspect."

"I can only repeat, sir, that I have not had the money. It is inexplicable. I may have been robbed."

"But there is no entry in the day-book."

It did not occur to Tom at the moment to plead that if he was dishonest he would have contrived not to be so in such a singularly silly fashion: that he might have taken cash paid for goods bought, and that the possibility of discovery would have been much smaller. He was stunned.

"It is so painful," continued Mr. Furze, "that I must have time to reflect. I will talk to you again about it to-morrow."

The truth was that Mr. Furze wished to consult his wife. When he went home his first news was what had happened, but he forgot to mention the corroboration by Jim.

"But," said Mrs. Furze, "Joe may have been

mistaken ; perhaps, after all, he did not pay the money."

"Ah ! but Jim was in the shop at the time. I had Jim in, and he swears that he saw Joe give it to Tom, and that Tom put it in the till."

Mrs. Furze seemed a little uncomfortable, but she soon recovered.

"We ought to have proof beyond all doubt of Tom's dishonesty. I do not see that this is proof. At any rate, it would not satisfy Catharine. I should wait a month. It is of no use making two faces about this business ; we must take one line or the other. I should tell him that, on reconsideration, you cannot bring yourself to suspect him ; that you have perfect confidence in him, and that there must be some mistake somewhere, though you cannot at present see how. That will throw him off his guard."

Mr. Furze acknowledged the superiority of his wife's intellect and obeyed. Tom came to work on the following morning in a state of great excitement, and with an offer of restitution, but was appeased, and Orkid Jim, appearing in the shop, was astonished and dismayed to find Tom and his

master on the same footing as before. He went up to the Terrace, the excuse being that he called to see how the new boiler was going on. Phœbe came to the door, but he wanted to see the mistress.

"What do you want her for? She knows nothing about the boiler. It is all right, I tell you."

"Never you mind. It wor she as give me the directions, worn't it, when I was 'ere afore?"

Accordingly the mistress appeared, and Phœbe, remaining in the kitchen, was sent upstairs upon some unimportant business, much cogitating upon the unusual interest Mrs. Furze took in the kitchen range, and the evident desire on her part that her instructions to Jim should be private.

"Well, Jim, the boiler is all right."

"That's more nor some things are."

"Why, what has happened?"

"I s'pose you know. Joe paid Humphries' bill, and Mr. Catchpole swears he never had the money, but Joe's got his recept."

"You were in the shop and saw it paid?"

"Of course I was. I s'pose you heerd that too?"

"Yes. We do not think, however, that the case is clear, and we shall do nothing this time."

"I don't know wot you'd 'ave, Mrs. Furze. If this 'ere ain't worth the five shillin' yer gave me, nothin' is—that's all I've got to say."

"But, Jim, you must see we cannot do anything unless the proof is complete. Now, if there should happen to be a second instance, that would be a different thing altogether."

"It ain't very comfortable for *me*."

"What do you mean? Mr. Furze sent for you, and you told him what you saw with your own eyes."

"Ah! you'd better mind wot you're sayin', Mrs. Furze, and you needn't put it in that way. Jist you look 'ere: I ain't very particklar myself, I ain't, but it may come to takin' my oath, and, to tell yer the truth, five shillin' don't pay me."

"But we are not going to prosecute."

"No, not now, but you may, and I shall have to stick to it, and maybe have to be brought up. Besides, it was put straight to me by the guvnor, and Mr. Tom was there a-lookin' at me right in my face. As I say, five shillin' don't pay me."

"Well, we shall not let the matter drop. We shall keep our eyes open: you may be sure of that, Jim. I daresay you have been worried over the business. Here's another five shillings for you."

Again Jim refrained from thanking her, but slowly put on his cap and left the house.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. FURZE tried several experiments during the next two or three weeks. It was his custom to look after his shop when Tom went to his meals, and on those rare occasions when he had to go out during Tom's absence, Orkid Jim acted as a substitute. Whenever Mr. Furze found a sovereign in the till he quietly marked it with his knife or a file, but it was invariably handed over to him in the evening. On a certain Wednesday afternoon, Tom being at his dinner, Mr. Furze was summoned to the Bell by a message from Mr. Eaton, and Jim was ordered to come immediately. He usually went round to the front door. He preferred to walk down the lane from the foundry, and when the back rooms were living rooms, passage through them was of course forbidden. As the summons, however, was urgent, he came the

shortest way, and, looking in through the window which let in some borrowed light from the back of the shop to the warehouse behind, he saw Mr. Furze, penknife in hand, at the till. Wondering what he could be doing, Jim watched him for a moment. As soon as Mr. Furze's back was turned he went to the till, took out a sovereign which was in it, closely examined it, discovered a distinct though faint cross at the back of his Majesty George the Third's head, pondered a moment, and then put the coin back again. He looked very abstruse, rubbed his chin, and finally smiled after his fashion. Tom's shop coat and waistcoat were hung up just inside the counting-house. Jim went to them and turned the waistcoat pockets inside out. To put the sovereign in an empty pocket would be dangerous. Tom would discover it as soon as he returned, and would probably inform Mr. Furze at once. A similar test for the future would then be impossible. Jim thought of a better plan, and it was strange that so slow a brain was so quick to conceive it. Along one particular line, however, that brain, otherwise so dull, was even rapid in its movements. It was

Mr. Furze's practice to pay wages at half-past five on Saturday afternoon, and he paid them himself. He generally went to his tea at six on that day, Tom waiting till he returned. On the following Saturday at half-past six Jim came into the shop.

"I met Eaton's man a minute ago as I wur goin' 'ome. He wanted to see the guvnor particklar, he said."

This was partly true, but the "particklar" was not true.

"I told him the guvnor warn't in, but you was there. He said he was goin' to the Bell, but he'd call again if he had time. You'd better go and see wot it is."

Tom took off his black apron and his shop coat and waistcoat, put them up in the usual place, and went out, leaving Jim in charge. Jim instantly went to the till. There were several sovereigns in it, for it had been a busy day. He turned them over, and again recognised the indubitable cross. With a swift promptitude utterly beyond his ordinary self, he again went to Tom's waistcoat—Tom always put gold in his waistcoat pocket—took out a sovereign of the

thirty shillings there, put it in his own pocket, and replaced it by the marked sovereign. Just before the shop closed, the cash was taken to Mr. Furze. He tied it carefully in a bag, carried it home, turned it over, and the sovereign was absent. Meanwhile Orkid Jim had begun to reflect that the chain of evidence was not complete. He knew Tom's habits perfectly, and one of them was to buy his Sunday's dinner on Saturday night. He generally went to a small butcher near his own house. Jim followed him, having previously exchanged his own sovereign for twenty shillings in silver. As soon as Tom had left the butcher's shop Jim walked in. He was well known.

"Mr. Butterfield, you 'aven't got a sovereign, 'ave you, as you could give me for twenty shillings in silver?"

"Well, that's a rum 'un, Mr. Jim: generally it's t'other way: you want the silver for the gold. Besides, we don't take many sovereigns here—we ain't like people in the High Street."

"Mr. Butterfield, it's jist this: we've 'ad overwork at the guvnor's, and I'm a-goin' to put a

sovereign by safe come next Whitsuntide, when I'm a-goin' to enjoy myself. I don't get much enjoyment, Mr. Butterfield, but I mean to 'ave it then."

"All right, Mr. Jim. I've only two sovereigns, and there they are. There's a bran-new one, and there's the other."

"I don't like bran-new nothin's, Mr. Butterfield. I ain't a Radical, I ain't. Wy, I've seed in my time an election last a week, and beer a-runnin' down the gutters. It was the only chance a poor man 'ad. Wot sort of a chance 'as he got now? There's nothin' to be 'ad now unless yer sweat for it: that's Radicalism, that is, and if I 'ad my way I'd upset the b——y Act, and all the lot of 'em. No, thank yer, Mr. Butterfield, I'll 'ave the old sovereign; where did he come from now, I wonder."

"Come from? Why, from your shop. Mr. Catchpole has just paid it me. You needn't go a-turnin' of it over and a-smellin' at it, Mr. Jim; it's as good as you are."

"Good! I worn't a-thinkin' about that. I wor jist a-lookin' at the picter of his blessed

Majesty King George the Third, and the way he wore his wig. Kewrus, ain't it? Now, somebody's been and scratched 'im jist on the neck. Do yer see that ere cross?"

"You seem awful suspicious, Mr. Jim. Give it me back again. I don't want you to have it."

"Lord! suspicious! 'Ere's your twenty shillin's, Mr. Butterfield. I wish I'd a 'undred sovereigns as good as this." And Mr. Jim departed.

Mr. Furze lost no time in communicating his discovery to his wife.

"Furze," she said, "you're a fool: where's the sovereign? You haven't got it, but how are you to prove now that he has got it? We are just where we were before. You ought to have taxed him with it at once, and have had him searched."

Mr. Furze was crestfallen, and made no reply. The next morning at church he was picturing to himself incessantly the dreadful moment when he would have to do something so totally unlike anything he had ever done before.

On the Sunday afternoon Jim appeared at the

Terrace, and Phœbe, who was not very well, and was at home, announced that he wished to see Mr. Furze.

"What can the man want? Tell him I will come down."

"I think," said Mrs. Furze, "Jim had better come up here."

Mr. Furze was surprised, but, as Phœbe was waiting, he said nothing, and Jim came up.

"Beg pardon for interruptin' yer on Sunday arternoon, but I've 'eerd as yer ain't satisfied with Mr. Catchpole, and I thought I'd jist tell yer as soon as I could as yesterday arternoon, while I was mindin' the shop, and he was out, I 'ad to go to the till, and it jist so 'appened, as I was a-givin' change, I was a-lookin' at a George the Third sovereign there, and took particklar notice of it. There was a mark on it. That werry sovereign was changed by Mr. Catchpole at Butterfield's that night, and 'ere it is. I 'ad to go in there, as I wanted a sovereign for a lot of silver, and he giv it to me."

"Can Butterfield swear that Catchpole gave it him?" said Mrs. Furze, quite calmly.

"Of course he can, marm; that's jist wot I asked him."

"That will do, Jim; you can go," said Mrs. Furze.

Jim looked at her, loitered, played with his cap, and seemed unwilling to leave.

"I'm comin' up to-morrow mornin', marm, just to 'ave one more look at that biler." He then walked out.

"I suppose I must prosecute now," said Mr. Furze.

"Prosecute! Nothing of the kind. What is your object? It is to get rid of him, and let Catharine see what he is. Suppose you prosecute and break down, where will you be, I should like to know? If you succeed, you won't be a bit better off than you are now. Discharge him. Everybody will know why, and will say how kind and forgiving you are, and Catharine cannot say we have been harsh to him.

Mr. Furze was uneasy. He had a vague feeling that everything was not quite right; but he said nothing, and mutely assented to his wife's proposals.

"Then I am to give him notice to-morrow?"

"You cannot keep him after what has happened. You must give him a week's wages and let him go."

"Who is to take his place?"

"Why do you not try Jim? He is rough, it is true, but he knows the shop. He can write well enough for that work, and all you want is somebody to be there when you are out."

Mr. Furze shuddered. That was not all he wanted, but he had hardly allowed himself, as we have already seen, to confess his weakness.

"It might be as well, perhaps," added Mrs. Furze, "to have Tom up to-morrow and talk to him here."

"That will be much better."

It was now tea-time, and immediately afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Furze went to church.

Soon after nine on the following morning, and before Mr. Furze had left, Jim appeared with another request "to see the missus."

"I'll go downstairs," she said. "He wants to see me about the boiler."

There was nobody but Jim in the kitchen.

"Well, Jim?"

"Well, marm."

"What have you got to say?"

"No, marm, it's wot 'ave you got to say?"

"It is very shocking about Mr. Catchpole, is it not? But, then, we are not surprised, you know; we have partly suspected something for a long time, as I have told you."

"'Ave you really? Well, then, it's a good thing as he's found out."

"I am very sorry. He has been with us so long, and we thought him such a faithful servant."

"You're sorry, are you? Yes, of course you are. Wot are yer goin' to do with him?"

"We shall not prosecute."

"No, marm, you take my advice, don't yer do that; it wouldn't do nobody no good."

"We shall discharge him at once."

"Yes, that's all right; but don't you prosecute 'im on no account, mind that. *Mis-sis* Furze," said Jim, deliberately, turning his head, and with his eyes full upon her in a way she did not like, "wot am I a-goin' to get out of this?"

"Why, you will be repaid, I am sure, by Mr.

Furze for all the time and trouble you have taken."

"Now, marm, I ain't a-goin' to say nothin' as needn't be said, but I know that Tom's been a-makin' up to Miss Catharine, and yer know that as soon as yer found that out yer come and spoke to me. Mind that, marm; it was yer as come and spoke to me; it wasn't me as spoke fust, was it?" Jim was unusually excited. "And arter yer spoke to me, yer spoke to me agin—agin I say it—arter I told you as I seed Joe pay the money, and then I brought yer that ere sovereign."

Mrs. Furze sat down. In one short minute she lived a lifetime, and the decision was taken which determined her destiny. She resolved that she would *not* tread one single step in one particular direction, nor even look that way. She did not resolve to tell a lie, or, in fact, to do anything which was not strictly defensible and virtuous. She simply refused to reflect on the possibility of perjury on Jim's part. Refusing to reflect on it, she naturally had no proof of it; and, having no proof of it, she had no ground for believing that she was not perfectly innocent and upright—a

very pretty process, much commoner than perhaps might be suspected. After the lapse of two or three hours there was in fact no test by which to distinguish the validity of this belief from that of her other beliefs, nor indeed, it may be said, from that of the beliefs in which many people live, and for the sake of which they die.

"It is true, Jim," said Mrs. Furze, after a pause, "that we thought Tom had so far forgotten himself as to make proposals to Miss Catharine, but this was a mere coincidence. It is extremely fortunate that we have discovered just at this moment what he really is; most fortunate. I have not the least doubt that he is a very bad character; your evidence is most decisive, and, as we owe so much to you, we think of putting you in Tom's place."

Jim had advanced with wariness, and occupied such a position that he could claim Mrs. Furze as an accomplice, or save appearances, if it was more prudent to do so. The reward was brilliant, and he saw what course he ought to take.

"Thank yer, marm; it was very lucky; now I may speak freely I may say as I've 'ad my eyes on Mr. Catchpole ever so long. I told yer as much

afore, and this ain't the fust time as he's robbed yer, but I couldn't prove it, and it worn't no good my sayin' wot I worn't sure of."

This, then, is the way in which Destiny rewards those who refuse to listen to the Divine Voice. Destiny supplies them with reasons for discrediting it. Mrs. Furze was more than ever thankful to Jim; not so much because of these additional revelations, but because she was still further released from the obligation to turn her eyes. Had not Jim said it once, twice, and now thrice? Who could condemn her? She boldly faced herself, and asked herself what authority this other self possessed which, just for a moment, whispered something in her ear. What right had it thus to interrogate her? What right had it to hint at some horrid villainy? "None, none," it timidly answered, and was silent. The business of this other self is suggestion only, and, if it be resisted, it is either dumb or will reply just as it is bidden.

"You can tell Mr. Catchpole his master wishes to see him here."

"Thankee, marm; good mornin'."

Tom came up to the Terrace much wondering,

and was shown into the dining-room by Phœbe not a little suspicious. Mr. Furze sat back in the easy-chair with his elbows on the arms and his hands held up and partly interlaced. It was an attitude he generally assumed when he was grave or wished to appear so. He had placed himself with his back to the light. Mrs. Furze sat in the window. Mr. Furze began with much hesitation.

"Sit down, Mr. Catchpole. I am sorry to be obliged to impart to you a piece—a something—which is very distressing. For some time, I must say, I have not been quite satisfied with the—the affairs—business—at the shop, and the case of Humphries' account made me more anxious. I could not tell who the—delinquent—might be, and, under advice, under advice, I resorted to the usual means of detection, and the result is that a marked coin placed in the till on Saturday was changed by you on Saturday night."

A tremendous blow steadies some men, at least for a time. Tom quietly replied—

"Well, Mr. Furze, what then?"

"What then?" said Mrs. Furze, with a little titter; "the evidence seems complete."

"A marked coin," continued Mr. Furze. "I may say at once that I do not propose to prosecute, although if I were to take proceedings and to produce the evidence of Jim and his brother with regard to Humphries, I should obtain a conviction. But I cannot bring myself to—to—the—forget your past services, and I wish to show no unchristian malice, even for such a crime as yours. You are discharged, and there are a week's wages."

"I am not sure," said Mrs. Furze, "that we are not doing wrong in the eye of the law, and that we might not ourselves be prosecuted for conniving at a felony."

Tom was silent for a moment, but it never entered into his head to ask for corroboration or any details.

"I will ask you both"—he spoke with deliberation and emphasis—"do you, both of you, believe I am a thief?"

"Really," said Mrs. Furze, "what a question to put! Two men declare money was paid to you for which you never accounted, and a marked sovereign, to which you had no right, was in your

possession last Saturday evening. You seem rather absurd, Mr. Catchpole."

"Mrs. Furze, I repeat my question: do you believe I am a thief?"

"We are not going to prosecute you: let that be enough for you; I decline to say any more than it suits me to say: you have had the reasons for dismissal; ask yourself whether they are conclusive or not, and what the verdict of a jury would be."

"Then I tell you, Mrs. Furze, and I tell you, Mr. Furze, before the all-knowing God, who is in this room at this moment, that I am utterly innocent, and that somebody has wickedly lied."

"Mr. Catchpole," replied Mrs. Furze, "the introduction of the sacred name in such a conjunction is, I may say, rather shocking, and even blasphemous. Here is your money: you had better go."

Tom left the money and walked out of the room.

"Good-bye, Phœbe."

"Are you going to leave, Tom?"

"Discharged!"

"I knew there was some villainy going on," said Phœbe, greatly excited, as she took Tom's hand and wrung it, "but you aren't really going for good?"

"Yes;" and he was out in the street.

"H'm," said Mr. Furze, "it's very disagreeable. I don't quite like it."

"Don't quite like it?—why, what *would* you have done? would you have had Catharine marry him? I have no patience with you, Furze!"

Mr. Furze subsided, but he did not move to go to his business, and Mrs. Furze went down into the kitchen. Mr. Eaton had called at the shop at that early hour wishing to see Mr. Furze or Tom. He was to return shortly, and Mr. Orkid Jim, not knowing exactly what to do with such a customer, and, moreover, being rather curious, had left a boy in charge and walked back to the Terrace.

"There's Jim again at the door," said Mrs. Furze to Phœbe; "let him in."

"Excuse me, ma'am, but never will I go to the door to let that man in again as long as I live."

"Phœbe! do you know what you are saying? I direct you to let him in."

"No, ma'am; you may direct, but I sha'n't. Nothing shall make me go to the door to the biggest liar and scoundrel in this town, and if you don't know it yourself, Mrs. Furze, you ought."

"You do not expect me to stand this, Phœbe? You will have a month's wages and go to-night."

"This morning, ma'am, if you please."

Before noon her box was packed, and she too had departed.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOM began to understand, as soon as he left the Terrace, that a consciousness of his own innocence was not all that was necessary for his peace of mind. What would other people say? There was a damning chain of evidence, and what was he to do for a living with no character?

He did not return home nor to the shop. He took the road to Chapel Farm. He did not go to the house direct, but went round it, and walked about, and at last found himself on the bridge. It was there that he met Catharine after her jump into the water; it was there, although he knew nothing about it, that she parted from Mr. Cardew. It was no thundery, summer day now, but cold and dark. The wind was north-east, persistent with unvarying force; the sky was covered with an almost uniform sheet of heavy grey clouds, with

no form or beauty in them ; there was nothing in the heavens or earth which seemed to have any relationship with man or to show any interest in him. Tom was not a philosopher, but some of his misery was due to a sense of carelessness and injustice somewhere in the government of the world. He was religious after his fashion, but the time had passed when a man could believe, as his forefathers believed, that the earth is a school of trial, and that after death is the judgment. What had he done to be visited thus? How was his integrity to be discovered? He had often thought that it was possible that a man should be convicted of some dreadful crime; that he should be execrated, not only by the whole countryside, but by his own wife and children; that his descendants for ages might curse him as the solitary ancestor who had brought disgrace into the family, and that he might be innocent. There might be hundreds of such; doubtless there have been. Perhaps, even worse, there have been men who have been misinterpreted, traduced, forsaken, because they have been compelled for a reason sacredly secret to take a certain course which seemed disreputable, and

the word which would have explained everything they have loyally sworn, for the sake of a friend, never to speak, and it has remained unspoken for ever. As he stood leaning over the parapet he saw Catharine coming along the path. She did not attempt to avoid him, for she wondered what he could be doing. He told her the whole story. "Miss Catharine, there is just one thing I want to know: do you believe I am guilty?"

"I know you are not."

"Thank God for that."

Both remained silent for a minute or two. At last Tom spoke.

"Oh, Miss Catharine, this makes it harder to bear. You are the one person, perhaps, in the world now who has any faith in me; there is, perhaps, no human being at this moment, excepting yourself, who, after having heard what you have heard, would at once put it all aside. What do you suppose I think of you now? If I loved you before, what must my love now be? Miss Catharine, I could tear out my heart for you, and if you can trust me so much, why can you not love me too? What is it that prevents your love?

Why cannot I alter it? And yet, what am I saying? You may think me honest, but how can I expect you to take a discharged felon!"

Catharine knew what Tom did not know. She was perfectly sure that the accusation against him was the result of the supposed discovery of their love for one another. If she had denied it promptly nothing perhaps would have happened. It was all due to her, then. She gazed up the stream; the leaden clouds drove on; the leaden water lay rippled; the willows and the rushes, vexed with the bitter blast, bent themselves continually. She turned and took her ring off her finger.

"It can never be," she slowly said; "here is my ring; you may keep it, but while I am alive you must never wear it."

Tom took it mechanically, bent his head over the parapet, and his anguish broke out in sobs and tears. Catharine took his hand in hers, leaned over him, and whispered:

"Tom, listen—I shall never be any man's wife."

Before he could say another word she had gone, and he felt that he should never see her again.

What makes the peculiar pang of parting? The coach comes up ; the friend mounts ; there is the wave of a handkerchief. I follow him to the crest of the hill ; he disappears, and I am left to walk down the dusty lane alone. Am I melancholy simply because I shall not see him for a month or a year? She whom I have loved for half a life lies dying. I kiss her and bid her good-bye. Is the bare loss the sole cause of my misery, my despair, breeding that mad longing that I myself might die? In all parting there is something infinite. We see in it a symbol of the order of the universe, and it is because that death-bed farewell stands for so much that we break down. "If it pleases God," says Swift to Pope, "to restore me to my health, I shall readily make a third journey ; if not, we must part *as all human creatures have parted*." As all human creatures have parted! Swift did not say that by way of consolation.

Tom turned homewards. Catharine's last words were incessantly in his mind. What they meant he knew not and could not imagine, but in the midst of his trouble rose up something not worth calling joy, a little thread of water in the waste : it

was a little relief that nobody was preferred before him, and that nobody would possess what to him was denied. He told his father, and found his faith unshakable. There was a letter for him in a handwriting he thought he knew, but he was not quite sure. It was as follows:—

"DEAR MR. CATCHPOLE,—I hope you will excuse the liberty I have taken in writing to you. I have left my place at the Terrace. I cannot help sending these few lines to say that Orkid Jim has been causing mischief here, and if he's had anything to do with your going he's a liar. It was all because I wouldn't go to the door and let him in, and gave missus a bit of my mind about him that I had notice. I wasn't sorry, however, for my cough is bad, and I couldn't stand running up and down those Terrace stairs. It was different at the shop. I thought I should just like to let you know that whatever missus and master may say, *I'm* sure you have done nothing but what is quite straight.

"Yours truly,

"PHŒBE CROWHURST."

Tom was grateful to Phœbe, and he put her letter in his pocket: it remained there for some time: it then came out with one or two other papers, was accidentally burnt with them, and was never answered. Day after day poor Phœbe watched the postman, but nothing came. She wondered if she had made any mistake in the address, but she had not the courage to write again. "He may be very much taken up," thought she, "but he might have sent me just a line;" and then she felt ashamed, and wished she had not written, and would have given the world to have her letter back again. She had been betrayed into a little tenderness which met with no response. She was only a housemaid, and yet when she said to herself that maybe she had been too forward, the blood came to her cheeks; beautifully, too beautifully white they were. Poor Phœbe!

Tom met Mr. Cardew in Eastthorpe the evening after the interview with Catharine, and told him his story.

"I am ruined," he said: "I have no character."

"Wait a minute; come with me into the Bell where my horse is."

They went into the coffee-room, and Mr. Cardew took a sheet of note-paper and wrote :—

"MY DEAR ROBERT,—The bearer of this note, Mr. Thomas Catchpole, is well known to me as a perfectly honest man, and he thoroughly understands his business. He is coming to London, and I hope you will consider it your duty to obtain remunerative employment for him. He has been wickedly accused of a crime of which he is as innocent as I am, and this is an additional reason why you should exert yourself on his behalf.

"Your affectionate cousin,

"THEOPHILUS CARDEW.

"To ROBERT BERDOE, Esq.,
"Clapham Common."

Mr. Cardew married a Berdoe, it will be remembered, and this Robert Berdoe was a wealthy wholesale ironmonger, who carried on business in Southwark.

"You had better leave Eastthorpe, Mr. Catchpole, and take your father with you. Are you in want of any money?"

"No, sir, thank you; I have saved a little. I cannot speak very well, Mr. Cardew; you know I cannot: I cannot say to you what I ought."

"I want no thanks, my dear friend. What I do is a simple duty. I am a minister of God's Word, and I know no obligation more pressing which He has laid upon me than that of bearing witness to the truth."

Mr. Cardew went off as usual away from what was before him.

"The duty of Christ's minister is, generally speaking, *to take the other side*—that is to say, to resist the verdicts passed by the world upon men and things. Preaching mere abstractions, too, is not by itself of much use. What we are bound to do is not only to preserve the eternal standard, but to measure actual human beings and human deeds by it. I sometimes think, too, it is of more importance to say *this is right* than to say *this is wrong*, to save that which is true than to assist into perdition that which is false. Especially ought we to defend character unjustly assailed. A character is something alive, a soul; to rescue it is the salvation of a soul!"

He stopped and seemed to wake up suddenly.

"Good-bye! God's blessing on you." He shook Tom's hand, and was going out of the yard.

"There is just one thing more, sir: I do not want to leave Eastthorpe with such a character behind me—to leave in the dark, one may say, and not defend myself. It looks as if it were an admission I was wrong. I should, above everything, like to get to the bottom of it, and see who is the liar or what the mistake is."

"Nobody would listen to you, and if you were to make a noise Mr. Furze might prosecute, and with the evidence he has we do not know what the end might be; I will do my part, as I am bound to do, to set you right. But, above everything, Mr. Catchpole, endeavour to put yourself where the condemnation of the world and even crucifixion by it are of no consequence." Mr. Cardew gave Tom one more shake of the hand, mounted his horse, and rode off. He had asked Tom for no proofs: he had merely heard the tale and had given his certificate.

Mr. Furze distinctly enjoined Orkid Jim to hold his tongue. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Furze wished

to appear in court, and they were uncertain what Catharine might do if they went any further. Mr. Orkid Jim had the best of reasons for silence, but Mr. Humphries, the builder, of course repeated what he himself knew, and so it went about that Tom was wrong in his accounts, and all Eastthorpe affirmed him to be little better than a rascal. Mr. Cardew, with every tittle of much stronger and apparently irresistible testimony before him, never for a moment considered it as a feather's weight in the balance.

"But the facts, my good sir, the facts; the facts —there they are: the receipt to the bill; Jim's declaration; his brother's declaration; the marked coin; the absolute proof that Catchpole gave it to Butterfield, and he could not, as some may think, have changed silver of his own for it, for Mr. Furze paid him in gold, and there was not twenty shillings worth of silver in the till; what *have* you got to say? Do you tell me all this may be accident and coincidence? If you do, we may just as well give up reasoning and the whole of our criminal procedure."

Mr. Cardew did know the facts, *the* facts, and

relying on them he delivered his judgment. Catharine, Phœbe, and Tom's father agreed with him—four jurors out of one thousand of full age; but the four were right and the nine hundred odd were wrong. In the four dwelt what aforetime would have been called Faith, nothing magical, nothing superstitious, but really the noblest form of reason, for it is the ability to rest upon the one reality which is of value, neglecting all delusive appearances which may apparently contradict it.

Tom left Eastthorpe the next morning, and on that day Catharine received the following letter from her mother:—

"MY DEAR CATHARINE,—I write to tell you that we have made an awful discovery. Catchpole has appropriated money belonging to your father, and the evidence against him is complete. (Mrs. Furze then told the story.) You will now, my dear Catharine, be able, I hope, to do justice to your father and mother, and to understand their anxiety that you should form no connection with a man like this. It is true that on the morning when we spoke to you we did not know the

extent of his guilt, but we had suspected him for some time. It is quite providential that the disclosure comes at the present moment, and I hope it will detach you from him for ever. Your father and I send our love, and please assure Mr. and Mrs. Bellamy of our regard.

"Your affectionate mother,

"AMELIA FURZE."

On the same morning Mr. Furze received the following note from Mr. Cardew:—

"DEAR SIR,—I regret to hear that a false charge has been preferred against my friend Mr. Catchpole. By my advice he has left Eastthorpe without any attempt to defend himself, but I consider it my duty to tell you he is innocent; that you have lost a faithful servant, and, what is worse, you have done him harm, not only in body, but in soul, for there are not many men who can be wrongfully accused and remain calm and resigned. You ask me on what evidence I acquit him. I know the whole story, but I also know him, and I know that he cannot lie. I beg you to consider

what you do in branding as foul that which God has made good. I offer no apology for thus addressing you, for I am a minister of God's Word, and I have to do all that He bids. I should consider I was but a poor servant of the Most High if I did not protest against wrong-doing face to face with the doer of it.

"Faithfully yours,

"THEOPHILUS CARDEW."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Furze were greatly incensed, and Mr. Cardew received the following reply, due rather to Mrs. than to Mr. Furze:—

"SIR,—I am greatly surprised at the receipt of your letter. You have taken up the cause of a servant against his master, and a dishonest servant, too: you have taken it up with only an imperfect acquaintance with the case, and knowing nothing of it except from his representation. If you were the clergyman of this parish I might, perhaps, recognise your right to address me, although I am inclined to believe that the clergy do far more harm than good by meddling with matters outside

their own sphere. How can we listen with respect to a minister who is occupied with worldly affairs rather than with those matters which befit his calling and concern our salvation? Sir, I must decline any discussion with you as to Mr. Catchpole's innocence or guilt, and respectfully deny your right to interfere.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. FURZE."

Catharine's first impulse was to go home instantly and vindicate Tom, but she did not move, and the letter remained unanswered. What could she say to her own parents which would meet the case or would be worthy of such a conspiracy? She would not be believed, and no good would be done. A stronger reason for not speaking was a certain pride and a determination to retaliate by silence, but the strongest of all reasons was a kind of collapse after she arrived at Chapel Farm, and the disappearance of all desire to fight. Her old cheerfulness began to depart, and a cloud to creep over her like the shadow of an eclipse. Young as she was, strange

thoughts possessed her. The interval between the present moment and death appeared annihilated; life was a mere span; a day would go by, and then a week, and in a few months, which could easily be counted, would come the end; nay, it was already out there, visible, approaching, and when she came to think what death really meant, the difference between right and wrong was worth nothing. Terrors vague and misty possessed her, all the worse because they were not substantial. She could not put into words what ailed her, and she wrestled with shapeless, clinging forms which she could hardly discern, and could not disentangle from her, much less overthrow. They wound themselves about her, and, although they were but shadows, they made her shriek, and at times she fainted under their grasp, and thought she could not survive. She had no peace. If soldiers lie dead upon a battle-field there is an end of them; new armies may be raised, but the enemy is at any rate weaker by those who are killed. It is not quite the same with our ghostly foes, for they rise into life after we think they are buried, and often with greater strength than ever.

There is something awful in the obstinacy of the assaults upon us. Day after day, night after night, and perhaps year after year, the wretched citadel is environed, and the pressure of the attack is unremitting, while the force which resists has to be summoned by a direct effort of the will, and the moment that effort relaxes the force fails, and the besiegers swarm upon the fortifications. That which makes for our destruction, everything that is horrible, seems spontaneously active, and the opposition is an everlasting struggle.

At last the effect upon Catharine's health was so obvious that Mrs. Bellamy was alarmed, and went over to Eastthorpe to see Mrs. Furze. Mrs. Furze in her own mind instantly concluded that Tom was the cause of her daughter's trouble, but she did not mean to admit it to her. In a sense Tom was the cause; not that she loved him, but because her refusal of him brought it vividly before her that her life would be spent without love, or, at least, without a love which could be acknowledged. It was a crisis, for the pattern of her existence was henceforth settled, and she was to live not only without that which is sweetest for

woman, but with no definite object before her. The force in woman is so great that something with which it can grapple, on which it can expend itself, is a necessity, and Catharine felt that her strength would have to occupy itself in twisting straws. It is really this which is the root of many a poor girl's suffering. As the world is arranged at present, there is too much power for the mills which have to be turned by it.

Mrs. Furze requested Mrs. Bellamy to send back Catharine at once in order that a doctor might be consulted. She returned: she did not really much care where she was; and to the doctor she went. Dr. Turnbull was the gentleman selected.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DR. TURNBULL was the doctor who, it will be remembered, lived in the square near the church. There was another doctor in Eastthorpe, Mr. Butcher, of whom we have heard, but Dr. Turnbull's reputation as a doctor was far higher than Mr. Butcher's. What Eastthorpe thought of Dr. Turnbull as a man is another matter. Mr. Butcher was married, church-going, polite, smiling to everybody, and when he called he always said, "Well, and how are *we?*" in such a nice way, identifying himself with his patient. But even Eastthorpe had not much faith in him, and in very serious cases always preferred Dr. Turnbull. Eastthorpe had remarked that Mr. Butcher's medicines had a curious similarity. He believed in two classes of diseases—sthenic and asthenic. For the former he prescribed bleeding

and purgatives ; for the latter he "threw in" bark and iron, and ordered port wine. Eastthorpe thought him very fair for colds, measles, chicken-pox, and for rashes of all sorts, and so did all the country round. He generally attended everybody for such complaints, but as Mr. Gosford said after his recovery from a dangerous attack, "when it come to a stoppage, I thought I'd better have Turnbull," and Mr. Gosford sent for him promptly.

Dr. Turnbull was born three or four years before the outbreak of the French Revolution. He was consequently a little older than the great Dr. Elliotson, whose memory some of us still piously cherish, and Dr. Elliotson and he were devoted friends. Dr. Turnbull was tall, thin, upright, with undimmed grey eyes and dark hair, which had hardly yet begun to turn in colour, but was a little worn off his forehead. He had a curiously piercing look in his face, so that it was impossible if you told him an untruth not to feel that you were detected. He never joked or laughed in the sick-room or in his consulting-room, and his words were few. But what was most striking in him was his

mute power of command, so that everybody in contact with him did his bidding without any effort on his part. He kept three servants—two women and a man. They were very good servants, but all three had been pronounced utterly intractable before they went to him. Master and mistress dared not speak to them; but with Dr. Turnbull they were suppressed as completely as if he had been Napoleon and they had been privates. He was kind to them, it is true, but at times very severe, and they could neither reply to him nor leave him. He did not affect the dress nor the manners of the doctors who preceded him. He wore a simple, black necktie, a shirt with no frill, and a black frock-coat. The poor worshipped him, as well they might, for his generosity to them was unexampled, and he took as much pains with them and was as kind to them as if they were the first people in Eastthorpe. He was perhaps even gentler with the poor than with the rich. He was very apt to be contemptuous, and to snarl when called to a rich man suffering from some trifling disorder, who thought that his wealth justified a second opinion, but he watched the whole night

through with the tenderness of a woman by the bedside of poor Phœbe Crowhurst when she had congestion of the lungs before she lived with Mrs. Furze. He saved that girl and would not take a sixpence, and when the mother, overcome with gratitude, actually fell on her knees before him and clung to him and sobbed and could not speak, he lifted her up with a "Nonsense, my good woman!" and quickly departed. He was a materialist, and described himself as one: he disbelieved in what he called the soap-bubble theory, that somewhere in us there is something like a bubble, which controls everything, and is everything, and escapes invisible and gaseous to some other place after death. Consequently he never went to church. He was not openly combative, but Eastthorpe knew his heresies, and was taught to shudder at them. His professionally religious neighbours of course put him in hell in the future, but the common people did not go so far as that, although they could not believe him saved. They somehow confounded his denial of immortality with his own mortality, and imagined he would be at an end when he was put into the grave. As

time wore on the attitude, even of the clergy, towards the doctor was gradually changed. They hastened to recognise him on week-days as he walked in his rapid, stately manner through the streets, although if they saw him on Sundays they considered it more becoming to avoid him. He was, as we have seen, a materialist, but yet he was the most spiritual person in the whole district. He took the keenest interest in science; he was generous, and a believer in a spiritualism infinitely beyond that of most of his neighbours, for they had not a single spiritual interest. He was spiritual in his treatment of disease. He was before his age by half a century, and instead of "throwing in" drugs after the fashion of Butcher, he prescribed fresh air, rest, and change, and, above everything, administered his own powerful individuality. He did not follow his friend Elliotson into mesmerism, but he had a mesmerism of his own, subduing all terror and sanative like light. Mr. Gosford was not capable of great expression, but he was always as expressive as he could be when he told the story of that dreadful illness.

"He come into the room and ordered all the

physic away, and then he sat down beside me, and it was just afore hay-harvest, and I was in mortal fright, and I said to him, 'Oh, doctor, I shall die.' Never shall I forget what I had gone through that night, for I'd done nothing but see the grave afore me, and I was lying in it a-rotting. Well, he took my hand, and he said, 'Why, for that matter, my friend, I must die too; but there's nothing in it; you won't complain when you find out what death is. You won't die yet, though, and you'll get this lot of hay in at any rate; what a heavy crop it is!' and he opened the winder and looked out. The way he spoke was wonderful, and what it was which come into me when he said, '*I must die too*,' I don't know, but all my terrors went away, and I lay as calm as a child. 'Fore God I did, as calm as a child, and I felt the wind upon me across the meadow while he stood looking at it, and I could almost have got up that minute. I warn't out of bed for a fortnight, but I did go out into the hayfield, as he said."

Why did Dr. Turnbull come to Eastthorpe? Nobody ever knew while he lived. The question had been put at least some thousands of times,

and all kinds of inquiries made, but with no result. The real reason, discovered afterwards, was simply that he had bad health, and that he had fled from temptation in the shape of a woman whom he loved, but whom duty, as he interpreted it, forbade him to marry, because he considered it wicked to run the risk of bringing diseased children into the world.

This was the man to whom Catharine went. Mrs. Furze went with her. He was perfectly acquainted with Mrs. Furze, and had seen Catharine, but had never spoken to her. Mrs. Furze told her story, which was that Catharine had no appetite, and was wasting, from no assignable cause. The doctor sounded her carefully, and then sat down without speaking. There was undoubtedly a weakness in one lung, but he was not satisfied. He knew how difficult it is to get people to tell the real truth to a physician, and that, if a third person is present, it is impossible. He therefore asked Mrs. Furze if she would step into the next room. "A girl," he said, "will not say all she has to say even to her mother." Mrs. Furze did not quite like it, but obeyed.

"Miss Furze," said the doctor, "I imagine you are a person who would not like to be deceived: you have a slight tenderness in the chest; there is no reasonable cause for alarm, but you will have to be careful."

Catharine's face lighted up a little when the last sentence was half finished, and the careful observer noticed it instantly.

"That, however, is not the cause of your troubles: there is something on your mind. I never make any inquiries in such cases, because I know if I did I should be met with evasions."

Catharine's eyes were on the floor. After a long pause she said—

"I am wretched: I have no pleasure in life; that is all I can say."

"If there is no definite cause for it—mind, I say that—I may do something to relieve your distress. When people have no pleasure in living, and there is no concrete reason for it, they are out of health, and argument is of no avail. If a man does not find that food and light and the air are pleasant, it is of no use to debate with himself. Have you any friends at a distance?"

"None."

"What occupation have you?"

"None."

"It is not often that people are so miserable that they are unable to make others less miserable. If instead of thinking about yourself you were to think a little about those who are worse, if you would just consider that you have duties and attempt to do them, the effort might be a mere dead lift at first, but it would do you good, and you would find a little comfort in knowing at the end of the day that, although it had brought no delight to you, it had through you been made more tolerable to somebody. Disorders of the type with which you are afflicted are terribly selfish. Mind, I repeat it, I presuppose nothing but general depression. If it is more than that I can be of no use."

Catharine was dumb, and Dr. Turnbull's singular power of winning confidence was of no avail to extract anything more from her.

"I am sorry you cannot leave home. I shall give you no medicine. With regard to the chest, the single definite point, you know what precau-

tions to take; as to the nervous trouble, do not discuss, ponder, or even directly attack, but turn the position, if I may so speak, by work and a determination to be of some use. If you were tempted by what you call wicked thoughts you would not nurse them. It is a great pity that people are so narrow in their notions of what wicked thoughts are. Every thought which maims you is wicked, horribly wicked, I call it. By the way, going to another subject, that poor girl, Phœbe Crowhurst, who lived at your house, is very ill again. She would like to see you."

Catharine left, and Mrs. Furze came in.

"Has anything unsettled your daughter lately?"

"No, nothing particular."

She thought of Tom, but to save Catharine's life she would not have acknowledged that it was possible for a Catchpole to have power to disturb a Furze. Had it been Mr. Colston now, the case would have been different.

"She needs care, but there is nothing serious the matter with her. She ought to go away, but I understand she has no friends at a distance with whom she can stay. Give her a little wine."

"Any medicine?"

"No, none; I should like to see her again soon; good morning."

Phœbe's home was near Abchurch, and Catharine went over to Abchurch to see her, not without remonstrance on the part of Mrs. Furze, Phœbe having been discharged in disgrace. Her father was an agricultural labourer, and lived in a little four-roomed, whitewashed cottage about a mile and a half out of the village. The living-room faced the north-east, the door opening direct on the little patch of garden, so that in winter, when the wind howled across the level fields, it was scarcely warmer indoors than outside, and rags and dish-clouts had to be laid on the door-sill to prevent the entrance of the snow and rain. At the back was a place, half outhouse, half kitchen, which had once had a brick floor, but the bricks had disappeared. Upstairs, over the living-room, was a bedroom, with no fireplace, and a very small casement window, where the mother and three children slept, the oldest a girl of about fourteen, the second a boy of twelve, and the third a girl of three or four, for the back bedroom over the out-

house had been given up to Phœbe since she was ill. The father slept below on the floor. Phœbe's room also had no fireplace, and great patches of plaster had been brought down by the rain on the south-west side. Just underneath the window was the pigstye. Outside nothing had been done to the house for years. It was not brick built, and here and there the laths and timber were bare, and the thatch had almost gone. Houses were very scarce on the farms in that part, and landlords would not build. The labourers consequently were driven into Abchurch, and had to walk, many of them, a couple of miles each way daily. Miss Diana Eaton, eldest daughter of the Honourable Mr. Eaton, had made a little sketch in water-colour of the cottage. It hung in the great drawing-room, and was considered most picturesque.

"Lovely! What a dear old place!" said the guests.

"It makes one quite enamoured of the country," exclaimed Lady Fanshawe, one of the most determined diners-out in Mayfair. "I never look at a scene like that without wishing I could give up London altogether. I am sure I could be content.

It would be so charming to get rid of conventionality and be perfectly natural. You really ought to send that drawing to the Academy, Miss Eaton."

That we should take pleasure in pictures of filthy, ruined hovels, in which health and even virtue are impossible, is a strange sign of the times. It is more than strange; it is an omen and a prophecy that people will go into sham ecstasies over one of these pigstyes so long as it is in a gilt frame; that they will give a thousand guineas for its light and shade—light, forsooth!—or for its Prout-like quality, or for its quality of this, that, and the other, while inside the real stye, at the very moment when the auctioneer knocks down the drawing amidst applause, lies the mother dying from dirt fever; the mother of six children starving and sleeping there—starving, save for the parish allowance, for the snow is on the ground and the father is out of work.

Crowhurst's wages were ten shillings a week, and the boy earned half a crown, but in the winter there was nothing to do for weeks together. All this, however, was accepted as the established

order of things. It never entered into the heads of the Crowhursts to revolt. They did not revolt against the moon because she was sometimes full and lit everybody comfortably, and at other times was new and compelled the use of rushlights. It was so ordained.

Half a mile beyond the cottage was a chapel. It stood at a cross-road, and no houses were near it. It had stood there for 150 years, gabled, red brick, and why it was put there nobody knew. Round it were tombstones, many totally disfigured, and most of them awry. The grass was always long and rank, full of dandelions, sorrel, and docks, excepting once a year in June when it was cut, and then it looked raw and yellow. Here and there was an unturfed, bare hillock, marking a new grave, and that was the only mark it would have, for people who could afford anything more did not attend the chapel now. The last "respectable family" was a farmer's hard by, but he and his wife had died, and his sons and daughters went to church. The congregation, such as it was, consisted nominally of about a dozen labourers and their wives and children, but no more than half of

them came at any one time. The windows had painted wooden shutters, which were closed during the week to protect the glass from stone-throwing, and the rusty iron gate was always locked, save on Sundays. The gate, the door, and the shutters were unfastened just before the preacher came, and the horrible chapel smell and chapel damp hung about the place during the whole service. When there was a funeral of any one belonging to the congregation the Abchurch minister had to conduct it, and it was necessarily on Sunday, to his great annoyance. Nobody could be buried on any other day, because work could not be intermitted; no labourer could stay at home when wife or child was dying; he would have lost his wages, and perhaps his occupation. He thought himself lucky if they died in the night.

The chapel was "supplied," as it was called, by an Abchurch deacon or Sunday-school teacher, who came over, prayed, preached, gave out hymns, and went away. That was nearly all that Cross Lanes knew of the "parent cause." The supplies were constantly being changed, and if it was very bad weather they stayed at home. On very rare

occasions the Abchurch minister appeared on Sunday evenings in summer, but that was only when he wanted rest, and could deliver the Abchurch sermon of the morning, and could obtain a substitute at home.

Crowhursts had been buried at Cross Lanes ever since it existed, but the present Crowhursts knew nothing of their ancestors beyond the generation immediately preceding. What was there to remember, or if there was anything worth remembering, why should they remember it? Life was blank, blind, dull as the brown clay in the sodden fields in November; nevertheless, the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world shone into the Crowhurst cottage —that Light greater than all lights which can be lit by priest or philosopher, as the sun is greater than all our oil-lamps, gas, and candles. When Phœbe first had congestion of the lungs, not a single note of murmuring at the trouble caused escaped a soul in the household. The mother sat up with her at night, and a poor woman half a mile off came in during the day and saw that things went all straight. To be sure, there

was Dr. Turnbull. It was a long way out of his rounds, but he knew the Crowhursts well, and, as we have said, he watched over Phœbe as carefully as if she had been the daughter of a duke. Now Phœbe was ill again, but Dr. Turnbull was again there, and although her cough was incessant, the care of father, mother, brother, and sister was perfect in its tenderness, and their self-forgetfulness was complete. It was not with them as with a man known to the writer of this history. His wife, whom he professed to love, was dying of consumption. "I do not deny she suffers," he said; "but nobody thinks of *me*." The sympathy of the agricultural poor with one another is hardly credible to fine people who live in towns. If we could have a record of the devotion of those women who lie forgotten under the turf round country churches throughout England, it would be better worth preserving than nine-tenths of our literature and histories. Surely in some sense they still *are*, and their love cannot have been altogether a thing of no moment to the Power that made them!

Catharine had never been to Phœbe's home

before. At the Terrace she was smart, attractive, and as particular as her mistress about her clothes. Nobody ever saw Phœbe with untidy shoes or stockings, and even in the morning, before she was supposed to be dressed, her little feet were as neat as if she had nothing to do but to sit in a drawing-room. She was now lying on a stump bedstead with a patchwork coverlet over her, and to protect her from the draughts an old piece of carpet had been nailed on a kind of rough frame and placed between her and the door. Catharine's first emotion when she entered was astonishment and indignation. Therein she showed her ignorance and stupidity. The owner of the cottage did not force the Crowhursts to live in it. It was not he who directed that a girl dying of consumption should lie close to a damp wall in a room eight feet square with no ventilation. He had the cottage, the Crowhursts, presumably, were glad to get it, and he conferred a favour on them.

"Oh, Miss Catharine," said Phœbe, "this is kind of you! To think of your coming over from Eastthorpe to see me, and after what happened

between me and Mrs. Furze! Miss Catharine, I didn't mean to be rude, but that Orkid Jim is a liar, and it's my belief that he's at the bottom of the mischief with Tom. You haven't heard of Tom, I suppose, Miss?"

"Yes, he is in London. He is doing very well."

"Oh, I am very thankful. I am afraid you will find the room very close, Miss. Don't stay if you are uncomfortable."

Catharine replied by taking a chair and sitting by the bedside. There was somewhat in Phœbe's countenance, Catharine knew not what, but it went to her heart, and she bent down and kissed her upon the forehead. They had always been half-friends when Phœbe was at the Terrace. The poor girl's eyes filled with tears, and a smile came over her face like the sunshine following the shadow of a cloud sweeping over the hillside. Mrs. Crowhurst came into the room.

"Why, mother, what are you doing here? You ought to be abed. Where is Mrs. Dunsfold?"

"Mrs. Dunsfold is laid up with the rheumatics,

my dear. But don't you bother ; we can manage very well. I will stay with you at night, and just have a bit of sleep in the mornings. Your sister can manage after I've seen to father's breakfast and while I'm a-lying down, and if she wants me, she's only got to call."

The mother looked worn and anxious, as though, even with Mrs. Dunsfold's assistance, her rest had been insufficient.

"Mrs. Crowhurst," said Catharine, "go to bed again directly. If you do not, you will be ill too. I will stay with Phœbe, at least for to-night, if anybody can be found to go to Eastthorpe to tell my mother I shall not be home."

"Miss Catharine! to think of such a thing! I'm sure you sha'n't," replied Mrs. Crowhurst; but Catharine persisted, and a message was sent by Phœbe's brother, who, although so young, knew the way perfectly well, and could be trusted.

The evening and the darkness drew on, and everything gradually became silent. Excepting Phœbe's cough, not a sound could be heard save the distant bark of some farmyard dog. As the air outside was soft and warm, Catharine opened

the window, after carefully protecting her patient. Phœbe was restless.

"Shall I read to you?"

"Oh, 'please, Miss; but there is nothing here for you to read but the Bible and a hymn-book."

"Well, I will read the Bible. What would you like?"

Phœbe chose neither prophecy, psalm, nor epistle, but the last three chapters of St. Matthew. She, perhaps, hardly knew the reason why, but she could not have made a better choice. When we come near death, or near something which may be worse, all exhortation, theory, promise, advice, dogma fail. The one staff which, perhaps, may not break under us, is the victory achieved in the like situation by one who has preceded us; and the most desperate private experience cannot go beyond the garden of Gethsemane. The hero is a young man filled with dreams and an ideal of a heavenly kingdom which he was to establish on earth. He is disappointed by the time he is thirty. He has not a friend who understands him, save in so far as the love of two or three poor women is understanding. One of his

disciples denies him, another betrays him, and in the presence of the hard Roman tribunal all his visions are nothing, and his life is a failure. He is to die a cruel death; but the bitterness of the cup must have been the thought that in a few days—or at least in a few months or years—everything would be as if he had never been. This is the pang of death, even to the meanest. "He that goeth down to the grave," says Job, "shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." A higher philosophy would doubtless set no store on our poor personality, and would even rejoice in the thought of its obliteration or absorption, but we cannot always lift ourselves to that level, and the human sentiment remains. Catharine read through the story of the conflict, and when she came to the resurrection she felt, and Phœbe felt, after her fashion, as millions have felt before, that this was the truth of death. It may be a legend, but the belief in it has carried with it other beliefs which are vital.

The reading ceased, and Phœbe fell asleep for a little. She presently waked and called Catharine.

"Miss Catharine," she whispered, drawing Catharine's hand between both her own thin hands, "I have something to say to you. Do you know I loved Tom a little; but I don't think he loved me. His mind was elsewhere; I saw where it was, and I don't wonder. It makes no difference, and never has, in my thoughts, either of him or of you. It will be better for him in every way, and I am glad for his sake. But when I am gone—and I sha'n't feel ashamed at his knowing it—please give him my Bible; and you may, if you like, put a piece of my hair in that last chapter you have been reading to-night."

"Phœbe, my Phœbe, listen," said Catharine: "I shall never be Tom's wife."

"Are you sure?"

"As sure as that I am here with my head on your pillow."

"I am sorry."

She then became silent, and so continued for two hours. Catharine thought she was asleep, but a little after dawn her mother came into the room. She knew better, and saw that the silence was not sleep, but the insensibility of death. In

a few minutes she hurried Catharine downstairs, and when she was again admitted Phœbe lay dead, and her pale face, unutterably peaceful and serious, was bound up with a white neckerchief. The soul of the poor servant-girl had passed away —only a servant-girl—and yet there was something in that soul equal to the sun whose morning rays were pouring through the window. She lies at the back of the meeting-house, amongst her kindred, and a little mound was raised over her. Her father borrowed the key of the gate every now and then, and, after his work was over, cut the grass where his child lay, and prevented the weeds from encroaching; but when he died, not long after, his wife had to go into the workhouse, and in one season the sorrel and dandelions took possession, and Phœbe's grave became like all the others—a scarcely distinguishable undulation in the tall, rank herbage.

CHAPTER XIX.

CATHARINE left the cottage that afternoon, and began to walk home to Eastthorpe. She thought, as she went along, of Phœbe's confession. She had loved Tom, but had reached the point of perfect acquiescence in any award of destiny, provided only he could be happy. She had faced sickness and death without a murmur; she had no theory of duty, no philosophy, no religion, as it is usually called, save a few dim traditional beliefs, and she was the daughter of common peasants; but she had attained just the one thing essential which religion and philosophy ought to help us to obtain, and, if they do not help us to obtain it, they are nothing. She lived not for herself, nor in herself, and it was not even justice to herself which she demanded. She had not become what she was because death was before her. Death and the

prospect of death do not work any change. Catharine called to mind Phœbe's past life: it was all of a piece, and countless little incidents unnoticed at the time obtained a significance and were interpreted. She knew herself to be Phœbe's superior intellectually, and that much had been presented to her which was altogether over Phœbe's horizon. But in all her purposes, and in all her activity, she seemed to have had self for a centre, and she felt that she would gladly give up every single advantage she possessed if she could but depose that self and enthrone some other divinity in its place. Oh the bliss of waking up in the morning with the thoughts turned outwards instead of inwards! Her misery which so weighed upon her might perhaps depart if she could achieve that conquest. She remembered one of Mr. Cardew's first sermons, when she was at Miss Ponsonby's, the sermon of which we have heard something, and she cried to herself, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

Strange, but true, precisely at that moment the passion for Mr. Cardew revived with more than its old intensity. Fresh from a deathbed, ponder-

ing over what she had learned or thought she had learned there—the very lesson which ought to have taught her to give up Mr. Cardew—she loved him more than ever, and was less than ever able to banish his image from her. She turned out of her direct road and took that which led past his house—swept that way as irresistibly as a mastless hull is swept by the tide. She knew that Mr. Cardew was in the habit of walking out in the afternoon, and she knew the path he usually took. She had not gone far before she met him. She explained what her errand had been, and added that she preferred the bypath because she was able to avoid the dusty Eastthorpe lane.

"I do not know those Crowhursts," said Mr. Cardew; "they are Dissenters, I believe."

The subject dropped, and Catharine had not another word to say about Phœbe.

"You look fatigued and as if you were not very well."

"Nothing particular; a little cough at times, but the doctor says it is of no consequence, if I only take care."

"You have been up all night, and you are now going to walk back to Eastthorpe?"

"Yes, the walk will refresh me."

He did not ask her to go to his house. Catharine noticed the omission; hoped he would not—knew he would not.

"Have you heard anything of your father's assistant, Mr. Catchpole?"

"Yes, he likes that situation which you obtained for him so kindly."

"Is he quite happy?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"I encountered Mr. Colston, junior, a few minutes ago. He was on his way to Eastthorpe. I am afraid I was rather rude to him, for, to tell you the truth, I did not want his society. He is not an interesting young man. Do you care anything for him?"

"Nothing."

"I should like to see the picture you have formed of the man for whom you would care. I do not remember"—speaking slowly and dreamily—"ever to have seen a woman who would frame a loftier ideal."

He unconsciously came nearer to her; his arm moved into hers, and she did not resist.

"What is the use of painting pictures when reality is unattainable?"

"Unattainable! Yes, just what I imagined: you paint something unattainable to ordinary mortality. It is strange that most men and women, even those who more or less in all they do strive after perfection, seem to be satisfied with so little when it comes to love and marriage. The same sculptor, who unweariedly refines day after day to put in marble the image which haunts him, forms no such image of a woman whom he seeks unceasingly, or, if he does, he descends on one of the first twenty he meets and thinks he adores her. There is some strong thwarting power which prevents his search after the best, and it is as if Nature had said that we should not pick and choose. But the consequences are tremendous. I honour you for your aspirations."

"You give me credit for a strength I do not possess, Mr. Cardew. I said 'unattainable.' That was all. I did not say how."

They had come to a gate which led out of

the field into the road, and they paused there. They leaned against the gate, and Mr. Cardew, although his arm was withdrawn from Catharine's, had placed it upon the top rail so that she felt it. The pressure would not have moved an ounce weight; there were half a dozen thicknesses of wool and linen between the arm and her shoulder, but the encircling touch sent a quiver through every nerve in her and shook her like electricity. She stood gazing on the ground, digging up the blades of grass with her foot.

"Do you mean," said Mr. Cardew, "that you have ever seen him, and that——"

The pressure behind her was a little more obvious: he bent his head nearer to hers, looked in her face, and she leaned back on the arm heavily. Suddenly, without a word, she put both her hands to her head, pushed aside her hair, and stood upright as a spear.

"Good-bye," she said, with her eyes straight on his. Another second and she had passed through the gate, and was walking fast along the road homewards alone. She heard behind her the sound of wheels, and an open carriage over-

took her. It was Dr. Turnbull's, and of course he stopped.

"Miss Furze, you are taking a long walk."

She told him she had been to see Phœbe, and of her death.

"You must be very tired: you must come with me."

She would have preferred solitude, but he insisted on her accompanying him, and she consented.

"I believe I saw Mr. Cardew in the meadow: I have just called on his wife."

"Is she ill?"

"Yes, not seriously, I hope. You know Mr. Cardew?"

"Yes, a little. I have heard him preach, and have been to his house when I was living at Abchurch."

"A remarkable man in many ways, and yet not a man whom I much admire. He thinks a good deal, and when I am in company with him I am unaccountably stimulated, but his thinking is not directed upon life. My notion is that our intellect is intended to solve real difficulties which

confront us, and that all intellectual exercise upon what does not concern us is worse than foolish. My brain finds quite enough to do in contriving how to remove actual hard obstacles which lie in the way of other people's happiness and my own."

"His difficulties may be different from yours."

"Certainly, but they are to a great extent artificial, and all the time spent upon them is so much withdrawn from the others which are real. He goes out into the fields reading endless books, containing records of persons in various situations. He is not like any one of those persons, and he never will be in any one of those situations. The situation in which he found himself that morning at home, or that in which a poor neighbour found himself, is that which to him is important. It is a pernicious consequence of the sole study of extraordinary people that the customary standards of human action are deposed, and other standards peculiar to peculiar creatures under peculiar circumstances are set up. I have known Cardew do very curious things at times. I do not believe for one moment he thought he was doing wrong,

but nevertheless, if any other man had done them, I should have had nothing more to say to him."

"Perhaps he ought to have his own rules. He may not be constituted as we are."

"My dear Miss Furze, as a physician, let me give you one word of solemn counsel. Nothing is more dangerous, physically and mentally, than to imagine we are not as other people. Strive to consider yourself, not as Catharine Furze, a young woman apart, but as a piece of common humanity and bound by its laws. It is infinitely healthier for you. Never, under any pretext whatever, allow yourself to do what is exceptional. If you have any originality, it will better come out in an improved performance of what everybody ought to do, than in the indulgence in singularity. For one person, who, being a person of genius, has been injured by what is called conventionality—I do not, of course, mean foolish conformity to what is absurd—thousands have been saved by it, and self-separation means mischief. It has been the beginning even of insanity in many cases which have come under my notice." The doctor paused a little.

"I am glad Mrs. Cardew is better," said Catharine. "I did not know she had been ill."

"There is a woman for you—a really wonderful woman, unobtrusive, devoted to her husband, almost annihilating herself for him, and, what is very noteworthy, she denies herself in studies to which she is much attached, and for which she has a remarkable capacity, merely in order that she may the better sympathise with him. Then her care of the poor in his parish makes her almost a divinity to them. While he is luxuriating amongst the cowslips, in what he calls thinking, she is teaching the sick people patience and nursing them. She is a saint, and he does not know half her worth. It would do you a world of good now, Miss Furze, to live with her for six months if she were alone, but I am not quite sure that his influence on you would be wholesome. I was alarmed about her, but she will not die yet if I can help it. I want her to recover for her own sake, but also for her husband's and for her friends' sake. Perhaps I was a little too severe upon the husband, for I believe he does really love her very much; at least, if he does not, he ought."

"Ought? Do you think, Dr. Turnbull, a man ought to love what he cannot love?"

"Yes, but I must explain myself. I have no patience with people who seem to consider that they may yield themselves to something they know not what, and allow themselves to be swayed by it. A man marries a woman whom he loves. Is it possible that she, of all women in the world, is the one he would love best if he were to know all of them? Is it likely that he would have selected this one woman if he had seen, say, fifty more before he had married her? Certainly not; and when he sees other women afterwards, better than the one he has chosen, he naturally admires them. If he does not he is a fool, but he is bound to check himself. He puts them aside and is obliged to be satisfied with his wife. If it were permissible in him in such a case to abandon her, a pretty chaos we should be in. It is clearly his duty, and quite as clearly in his power, to be thus contented—at least, in nine cases out of ten. He *may*—and this is my point—he *may* wilfully turn away from what is admirable in his own house, or he may turn towards it. He is as responsible

for turning away from it, or turning towards it, as he is for any of his actions. If he says he cannot love a wife who is virtuous and good, I call him not only stupid, but wicked—yes, wicked : people in Eastthorpe will tell you I do not know what that word means, because I do not go to church, and do not believe in what they do not believe themselves, but still I say wicked—wicked because he *can* love his wife, just as he can refrain from robbing his neighbour, and wicked because there is a bit of excellence stuck down before him for *him* to value. It is not intended for others, but for *him*, and he deserts the place appointed him by Nature if he neglects it."

"You have wonderful self-control, Dr. Turnbull. I can understand that a man might refrain from open expression of his love for a woman, whatever his passion for her might be, for, if he did not so restrain himself, he might mar the peace of some other person who was better than himself, and better deserved that his happiness should not be wrecked ; but as for love, it may be beyond him to suppress it."

"Well, Miss Furze," replied the doctor, smiling,

"we are going beyond our own experience, I hope. However, what I have said is true. I suppose it is because it is my business to cure disease that I always strive to extend the realm of what is *subject* to us. You seem to be fond of an argument. Some day we will debate the point how far the proper appreciation even of a picture or a melody is within our own power. But I am a queer kind of doctor. I have never asked you how you are, and you are one of my patients."

"Better."

"That is good, but you must be careful, especially in the evening. It was not quite prudent to sit up last night at the Crowhursts', but yet, on the whole, it was right. No, you shall not get down here; I will drive you up to the Terrace."

He drove her home, and she went upstairs to lie down.

"Commonplace rubbish!" she said to herself; "what I used to hear at Miss Ponsonsby's, but dressed up a little better, the moral prosing of an old man of sixty who never knew what it was to have his pulse stirred; utterly incapable of understanding Mr. Cardew, one of whose ideas

moves me more than volumes of Turnbull copy-book."

Pulse stirred! The young are often unjust to the old in the matter of pulsation, and the world in general is unjust to those who prefer to be silent, or to whom silence is a duty. Dr. Turnbull's pulse was unmistakably stirred on a certain morning thirty years ago, when he crept past a certain door in Bloomsbury Square very early. The blinds were still all drawn down, but he lingered and walked past the house two or three times. He had come there to take a last look at the bricks and mortar of that house before he went to Eastthorpe, under vow till death to permit no word of love to pass his lips, to be betrayed into no emotion warmer than that of man to man. His pulse was stirred, too, when he read the announcement of her marriage in the *Times* five years afterwards, and then in a twelvemonth the birth of her first child. How he watched for that birth! Ten days afterwards she died. He went to the funeral, and after the sorrowing husband and parents had departed he remained, and the most scalding tears shed by

the grave were his. It was not exactly moral prosing, but rather inextinguishable fire just covered with a sprinkling of grey ash.

With that dreadful capacity which some people possess for the realisation of that which is not present, the parting with Mr. Cardew came before Catharine as she shut her eyes on her pillow: the arm was behind her — she actually felt it; his eyes were on hers; she was on fire, and once more, as she had done before, she cursed herself for what she almost called her cowardice in leaving him. She wrestled with her fancies, turned this way and that way: at times they sent the blood hot into her face, and she rose and plunged it into cold water. She was weary, but sleep was impossible. "Commonplace rubbish!" she repeated: "of what use is it to me?" She was young. When we grow old we find that what is commonplace is true. *We must learn to bear our troubles patiently*, says the copper-plate line for small text, and the revolving years bring nothing more. She heard outside a long-drawn breath, apparently just under the door. She opened it, and found Alice,

her retriever. Alice came in, sat down by the chair, and put her head on her mistress's lap, looking up to her with large, brown, affectionate eyes which almost spoke. There is something very touching in the love of a dog. It is independent of all our misfortunes, mistakes, and sins. It may not be of much account, but it is constant, and it is a love for *me*, and does not desert me for anything accidental, not even if I am criminal. That is because a dog is a dog, it may be said ; if it had a proper sense of sin it would instantly leave the house. Perhaps so, perhaps not : it may be that with a proper sense of sin it would still continue to love me. Anyhow, it loves me now, and I take its fidelity to be significant of something beyond sin. Alice had a way of putting her feet on her mistress's lap, as if she asked to be noticed. When no notice was taken she generally advanced her nose to Catharine's face—a very disagreeable habit, Mrs. Furze thought, but Catharine never would check it. The poor beast was more than usually affectionate to-day, and just turned Catharine's gloom into tears. She was disturbed by a note from Dr.

Turnbull. He thought that what she needed was rest, and she was to go to bed and take his medicine. This she did, and she fell into a deep slumber from which she did not wake till morning.

Mr. Cardew, when Catharine left him, walked homewards, but he went a long distance out of his way, much musing. As he went along something came to him—the same Something which had so often restrained Catharine. It smote him as the light from heaven smote Saul of Tarsus journeying to Damascus. His eyes were opened; he crept into an outhouse in the fields, and there alone in an agony he prayed. It was almost dark when he reached his own gate, and he went up to his wife's bedroom, where she lay ill. He sat down by the bed: some of her flowers were on a little table at her side.

"I am so ignorant of flowers, Doss (the name he called her before they were married); you really *must* teach me."

"You know enough about them."

He took her hand in his, put his head on the pillow beside her, and she heard a gasp which sounded a little hysterical.

"What is the matter, my dear? You are tired. You have walked a long way."

She turned round, and then without another word he rose a little, leaned over her, and kissed her passionately. She never knew what his real history during the last year or two had been. He outlived her, and one of his sorrows when she was lying in the grave was that he had told her nothing. He was wrong to be silent. A man with any self-respect will not be anxious to confess his sins, save when reparation is due to others. If he be completely ashamed of them he will hold his tongue about them. But the perfect wife may know them. She will not love him the less: he will love her the more as the possessor of his secrets, and the consciousness of her knowledge of him and of them will strengthen and often, perhaps, save him.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. CARDEW recovered, but Dr. Turnbull recommended that as soon as she could be moved she should have an entire change, and at the end of the autumn she and her husband went abroad.

That winter was a bad winter for Mr. Furze. The harvest had been the worst known for years: farmers had no money; his expenses had increased; many of his customers had left him, and Catharine's cough had become so much worse that, except on fine days, she was not allowed to go out of doors. For the first time in his life he was obliged to overdraw his account at the bank, and when his wife questioned him about his troubles he became angry and vicious. One afternoon he had a visit from one of the partners in the bank, who politely informed him that no further

advances could be made. It was near Christmas, and it was Mr. Furze's practice at Christmas to take stock. He set to work, and his balance-sheet showed that he was a poorer man by three hundred pounds than he was a twelvemonth before. Catharine did not see him on the night on which he made this discovery. He came home very late, and she had gone to bed. At breakfast he was unlike himself—strange, excited, and with a hunted, terrified look in the eyes which alarmed her. It was not so much the actual loss which upset him as the old incapacity of dealing with the unusual. Oh, for one hour with Tom! What should he do? Should he retrench? Should he leave the Terrace? Should he try and borrow money? A dizzy whirl of a dozen projects swung round and round in his brain, and he could resolve on nothing. He pictured most vividly and imagined most vividly the consequences of bankruptcy. His intellectual activity in that direction was amazing, and if one-tenth part of it could have been expended on the consideration of the next best thing to be done, not only would he have discovered what the next

best thing was, but the dreadful energy of his imagination would have been enfeebled. He was sitting at his desk at the back of the shop with his head propped on his elbows, when he heard a soft footstep behind him. He turned round: it was Catharine.

"Dearest father," she said, "what is the matter? Why do you not tell me?"

"I am a ruined man. The bank refuses to make any further advances to me, and I cannot go on."

Catharine was not greatly surprised.

"Look at that," he said. "I don't know what to do; it is as if my head were going wrong. If I had lost a lot of money through a bad debt it would be different, but it is not that: the business has been going down bit by bit. There is nothing before us but starvation."

Catharine glanced at the abstract of the balance-sheet.

"You must call your creditors together and make a proposal to them. You will then start fair, and we will reduce our expenses. Nothing will be easier. We will live at the shop again; you will be able to look after things properly,

and everything will go right—it will, indeed, father."

She was very tender with him, and her love and counsel revived his spirits. Suddenly she was seized with a fit of coughing, and had to sit down. He thought he saw a red stain on the pockethandkerchief she put to her mouth.

"You shall not stay in this cold shop, my dear; you ought not to have come out."

"Nonsense, father! There is nothing the matter. Have you a list of your creditors?"

"Yes; there it is."

She glanced at it, and to her amazement saw Mr. Cardew's name down for £100.

"Mr. Cardew, father?"

"Yes; he came in one day, and said that he had some money lying idle, and did not know what to do with it. I was welcome to it if I wanted it for the business."

A statement was duly prepared by Mr. Askew, Mr. Furze's solicitor; the usual notice was sent round, and the meeting took place in a room at the Bell. A composition of seven-and-sixpence in the pound was offered, to be paid within a

twelvemonth, with a further half-crown in two years' time, the debtor undertaking to give up his house in the Terrace.

"Considering," said the lawyer, "that the debts owing to the estate are nearly all good, although just now it is difficult to realise, I think, gentlemen, you are safe, and I may add that this seems to me a very fair proposal. My client, I may say, would personally have preferred a different course, and would have liked to bind himself to pay in full at some future time, but I cannot advise any such promise, for I do not think he would be able to keep it."

"I shall want some security for the half-crown," said Mr. Crook, representative of the firm of Jenkins, Crook and Hardman, iron merchants in Staffordshire.

"Can't say as I'm satisfied," said Mr. Nagle, brass founder. "The debtor takes an expensive house without any warranty, and he cannot expect much consideration. I must have ten shillings now. Times are bad for us as well as for him."

Mr. Furze turned very white and rose to speak, but Mr. Askew pulled him down.

"I beg, gentlemen, you will not take extreme measures. Ten shillings now would mean a sale of furniture, and perhaps ruin. My client has been a good customer to you."

"I am inclined to agree with Mr. Nagle," said Mr. Crook. "Sentiment is all very well, but I do not see why we should make the debtor a present of half a crown for a couple of years. For my own part, if I want to be generous with my money, I have plenty of friends of my own to whom to give it."

There was a pause, but it was clear that Mr. Nagle's proposal would be carried.

"I am authorised," said a tall gentleman at the back of the room, whom Mr. Askew knew to be Mr. Carruthers, of Cambridge, head of the firm of Carruthers, Doubleday, Carruthers and Pearse, one of the most respectable legal firms in the county, "to offer payment in full at once."

"It is a pity," said Mr. Nagle, "that this offer could not have been made before. We might have been saved the trouble of coming here."

"Pardon me," replied Mr. Carruthers; "my client has been abroad for some time, and did not return till last night."

The February in which the meeting of Mr. Furze's creditors took place was unusually wet. There had been a deep snow in January, with the wind from the north-east. The London coaches had, many of them, been stopped both on the Norwich, Cambridge, and Great North roads. The wind had driven with terrible force across the flat country, piling up the snow in great drifts, and curling it in fantastic waves which hung suspended over the hedges and entirely obliterated them. Between Eaton Socon and Huntingdon one of the York coaches was fairly buried, and the passengers, after being near death's door with cold and hunger, made their way to a farmhouse which had great difficulty in supplying them with provisions. Coals rose in Abchurch and Eastthorpe to four pounds a ton, and just before the frost broke there were not ten tons in both places taken together. Suddenly the wind went round by the east to the south-west, and it began to rain heavily, not only in the Eastern Midlands, but far away in the counties to the west and south-west through which the river ran. The snow and ice melted very quickly, and then came a flood, the like of which had not been

seen in those parts before. The outfall has been improved since that time, so that in all probability no such flood will happen again. The water, of course, went all over the low-lying meadows. For miles and miles on either bank it spread into vast lakes, and the only mark by which to distinguish the bed of the stream was the greater rush and the roar. Cottages were surrounded, and people were rescued by boats. Every sluice and mill-dam were opened, but the torrent poured past them, and at Cottington Mill it swept from millpool to tail right over the road which divided them, and washed away nearly the whole garden. When the rain ceased the worst had to come, for the upper waters did not reach Eastthorpe until three or four days later. Then there was indeed a sight to be seen! The southern end of Eastthorpe High Street was actually two feet under water, and a man in a boat —event to be recorded for ever in the Eastthorpe annals—went from the timber-yard on one side of the street through the timber-yard gates and into the coal-yard opposite. Parts of haystacks, trees, and dead bodies of sheep and oxen drove down on the yellow, raging waves, and were caught against

the abutments of the bridge. At one time it was thought that it must give way, for the arches were choked; the water was inches higher on the west side than on the east, and men with long poles stood on the parapet to break up the obstructions.

At last the flood began to subside, and on the afternoon of the day of the creditors' meeting Mr. Orkid Jim appeared at the boathouse at the bottom of Rectory Lane and asked to be taken across. The stream was still very strong, but the meadows were clear, and some repair was necessary to the ironwork of a sluice-gate just opposite, which Jim wished to inspect before the men were set to work.

"Don't know as it's safe, Mr. Jim," said the boatman. "It's as much as ever I can get through. It goes uncommon strong against the willows there."

"You'll get through all right. I'll give yer a hand. I don't care to go a mile round over the bridge."

"Yes, that's all very well, Mr. Jim, but I don't want my boat smashed."

"Smashed! I am a lucky one, I am. No harm comes to any boat or trap as long as I'm in it."

The boatman consented. Just as he was about to push off, another man came down and asked for a passage. It was Tom Catchpole. Jim stared, but said nothing to him. The boatman also knew Tom, but did not speak. Jim now had half a mind to alter his intention of crossing.

"I don't know as I'll go," said he. "It does look queer, and no mistake."

"Well, don't keep me a-waitin', that's all."

Jim took his seat and went to the stern. Tom sat in the bow, and the boatman took the sculls. He had to make for a point far above the island, so as to allow for the current, and he just succeeded in clearing it. He then began to drift down to the landing-place in the comparatively still water between the island and the mainland. Jim stood up with a boat-hook in his hand and laid hold of an overhanging willow in order to slacken their progress, but the hook stuck in the wood, and in an instant the boat was swept from under him and he was in the water. He went down like a stone, for he could not swim, but rose again just as he was passing. Tom leaned over the side, managed to catch him by the coat-collar

and hold his head above water. Fortunately the boat had swung round somewhat, and in a few seconds struck the bank. It was made fast, and in an instant Jim was dragged ashore and was in safety.

"That's a narrow squeak for you, Mr. Jim. If it hadn't been for Mr. Catchpole you'd have been in another world by this time."

Jim was perfectly sensible, but his eyes were fixed on Tom with a strange, steady stare.

"Hadn't you better be moving and take off them things?"

Still he did not stir; but at last, without a word, he turned round and slowly walked away.

"That's a rum customer," observed the boatman; "he might have thanked us at least, and he hasn't paid me. Howsomever, I sha'n't forget it the next time I see him."

Tom made no reply: gave the man double his usual fare, and went across the meadow. He had no particular object in coming to Eastthorpe, excepting that he had heard there was to be a meeting of Mr. Furze's creditors, and he could not rest until he knew the result. He avoided the

main street as much as possible, but he intended to obtain his information from Mr. Nagle at the Bell.

As to Jim, he went home, changed his clothes, and went out again. He walked up and down the street, and presently met Tom.

"Mr. Catchpole," he said, "will you please come along o' me?"

There was something of authority in the tone of Jim's voice, and yet something which forbade all fear. Tom followed him in silence, and they went to the Terrace. Mr. Furze was not at home, but Jim knew he would be back directly, and they waited in the kitchen, Tom much wondering, but restrained by some strange compulsion—he could not say what—not only to remain, but to refrain from asking any questions. Directly Mr. Furze returned, Jim went upstairs, with Tom behind him, and to the amazement of Mr. and Mrs. Furze presented him in the dining-room.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Mrs. Furze.

"Mrs. Furze," said Jim, "will you please excuse

me, and allow me to speak for this once? I don't see Miss Catharine here. I want yer to send for her. Wot I've got to say, I mean to say afore you all."

Catharine was in her bedroom. She came down wrapped up in a shawl, and Jim stood up.

"Mr. Furze, Mrs. Furze, Miss Catharine, and you, Mr. Catchpole, you see afore you the biggest liar as ever was, and one as deserves to go to hell, if ever any man did. Everything agin Mr. Catchpole was all trumped up, for he never had Humphries' money, and it was me as put the marked sovereign in his pocket. I was tempted by the devil and by—but the Lord 'as 'ad mercy on me and 'as saved my body and soul this day. I can't speak no more, but 'ere I am if I'm to be locked up and transported as I deserve."

"Never," said Tom.

"You say never, Mr. Catchpole. Very well, then: on my knees I axes your pardon, and you won't see me agin." Jim actually knelt down. "May the Lord forgive me, and do you forgive me, Mr. Catchpole, for being such a——" (Jim was about to use a familiar word, but checked

himself, and contented himself with one which is blasphemous but also orthodox)—such a damned sinner."

He rose, walked out, left Eastthorpe that night, and nothing more was heard of him for years. Then there came news from an Eastthorpe man, who had gone to America, that Jim was at work at Pittsburg; that he was also a preacher of God's Word, and that by God's grace he had brought hundreds to a knowledge of their Saviour.

This story may be deemed impossible by the ordinary cultivated reader, but he will please to recollect John Bunyan's account of the strange behaviour of Mr. Tod. "At a summer assizes holden at Hertford," says Bunyan, "while the judge was sitting up on the bench, comes this old Tod into court, clothed in a green suit, with his leathern girdle in his hand, his bosom open, and all in a dung sweat, as if he had run for his life; and being come in, he spake aloud as follows: 'My Lord,' said he, 'here is the veriest rogue that breathes upon the face of the earth. I have been a thief from a child. When I was but a little one I gave myself to rob orchards, and to do other

such like wicked things, and I have continued a thief ever since. My Lord, there has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this place, but I have been either at it, or privy to it!' The judge thought the fellow was mad, but, after some conference with some of the justices, they agreed to indict him; and so they did of several felonious actions; to all of which he heartily confessed guilty, and so was hanged with his wife at the same time." I can also assure my incredulous literary friends that years ago it was not uncommon for men and women suddenly to awake to the fact that they had been sinners, and to determine that henceforth they would keep God's commandments by the help of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. What is more extraordinary is that they did keep God's commandments for the rest of their lives. Fear of hell fire and hope of heaven may have had something to do with their reformation, but these were not the sole motives, and even if they were, the strength of mind necessary in order to sacrifice the present for the sake of something remote—a capacity which lies, we are told, at the basis of all virtue—was singular.

CHAPTER XXI.

TOM was restored to his former position, and Mr. Furze's business began to improve. Arrangements were made for the removal from the Terrace, and they were eagerly pressed forward by Catharine. Her mother pleaded that they could not leave till June; that even in June they would sacrifice a quarter's rent, but Catharine's reply was that they would pay no more if they went beforehand. Her father was anxious to please her, and the necessary alterations at the shop were taken in hand at once, and towards the beginning of May were completed. She was not allowed to move to the High Street with her father and mother; it was thought that the worry and fatigue would be too much for her, and it was settled, as the weather was wonderfully warm and bright for the time of year, that she should go over to Chapel Farm for a

week. At the end of the week she would find the furniture all in its place and her room quite straight. Mrs. Bellamy called for her, and she reached the farm in safety, and looking better. The next morning she begged to be taken for a drive. Mr. Bellamy had to go over to Thingleby, and she was able to go with him. It was a lovely sunny day, one of those days which we sometimes have in May, summer days in advance of the main body, and more beautiful, perhaps, than any that follow, because they are days of anticipation and hope, our delight in the full midsummer being sobered by the thought of approaching autumn and winter. When they reached the bridge Mr. Bellamy remembered that he had forgotten his cheque-book and his money, and it was of no use to go to Thingleby without them.

"Botheration! I must go back, my dear."

"Leave me here, Mr. Bellamy; you won't be long. Let me get out, though, and just turn the mare aside off the road on to the grass against the gate; she will be quite quiet."

"Had you not better sit still? I shall be back in a quarter of an hour."

"If you do not mind, dear Mr. Bellamy, I should so like to stand on the bridge. I cannot let the gig stay there."

"Well, my dear, you shall have your own way. You know," he said, laughing, "I've long ago given up asking why my Catharine wants anything whatsomever. If she wishes it that's enough for me."

Catharine dismounted, and Mr. Bellamy walked back. She went to the parapet and once more looked up the stream. Once more, as on a memorable day in August, the sun was upon the water. Then the heat was intense, and the heavy cumulus clouds were charged with thunder and lightning. Now the sun shone with nothing more than warmth, and though the clouds, the same clouds, hung in the south-west, there was no fire in them, nothing but soft, warm showers. She looked and looked, and tears came into her eyes—tears of joy. Never had a day been to her what that day was. She felt as if she lay open to all the life of spring which was pouring up through the earth, and it swept into her as if she were one of those bursting exultant chestnut buds, the sight of which

she loved so in April and May. Always for years when the season came round had she gathered one of those buds and carried it home, and it was more to her than any summer flower. The bliss of life passed over into contentment with death, and her delight was so great that she could happily have lain down amid the hum of the insects to die on the grass.

When they came back to the farm Mr. Bellamy observed to his wife that he had not seen Catharine looking better or in better spirits for months. Mrs. Bellamy said nothing, but on the following morning Catharine was certainly not so well. It was intended that she should go home that day, but it was wet, and a message was sent to Eastthorpe to explain why she did not come. The next day she was worse, and Mrs. Bellamy went to Eastthorpe and counselled Mr. and Mrs. Furze to come to the Farm, and bring Dr. Turnbull with them. They all three came at once, and found Catharine in bed. She was feverish, and during the night had been slightly delirious. The doctor examined her carefully, and after the examination was over she turned to him and said—

"I want to hear the truth; I can bear it. Am I to die?"

"I know you can bear it. No man could be certain; but I believe the end is near."

"How much time have I?"

He sat down by the bedside. "Perhaps a day, perhaps a week. Is there anybody you wish to see?"

"I should like to see Mr. Cardew."

"Mr. Cardew!" said Dr. Turnbull to himself; "I fancied she would not care to have a clergyman with her; I thought she was a little beyond that kind of thing, but when people are about to die even the strongest are a little weak."

"She always liked Mr. Cardew's preaching," said Mrs. Furze, sobbing, but I wish she had asked for her own rector. It isn't as if Mr. Cardew were her personal friend."

It was Saturday evening when the message was dispatched to Abchurch, but Mr. Cardew was fortunately able to secure a substitute for the morrow. Sunday morning came. Mrs. Furze, who had been sitting up all night, drew down the blinds at dawn, but Catharine asked, not only that they might be

drawn up again, but that her bed might be shifted a little so that she might look out across the meadow and towards the bridge. "The view that way is so lovely," said she. It was again a triumphal spring day, and light and warmth streamed into the sick chamber.

Presently her mother went to take a little rest, and Mr. Cardew was announced almost immediately afterwards. He came upstairs, and Mrs. Bellamy, who had taken Mrs. Furze's place, left the room. She did not think it proper to intrude when the clergyman visited anybody who was dying. Mr. Cardew remained standing and speechless.

"Sit down, Mr. Cardew. I felt that I should like to see you once more."

He sat down by the bedside.

"Do you mind opening the window and drawing up the blind again? It has fallen a little. That is better: now I can see the meadows and away towards the bridge foot. Will you give me a glass of water?"

She drank the water: he looked steadily at her, and he knew too well what was on her face. Her

hand dropped on the bed: he fell on his knees beside her with that hand in his, but still he was dumb, and not a single article of his creed which he had preached for so many years presented itself to him: forgiveness, the atonement, heaven—it had all vanished.

"Mr. Cardew, I want to say something."

"Wait a moment, let me tell you—*you have saved me.*"

She smiled, her lips moved, and she whispered—

"*You* have saved *me.*"

By their love for each other they were both saved. The disguises are manifold which the Immortal Son assumes in the work of our redemption.

Tom henceforth wore the ring on his finger. Mr. Cardew resigned his living, and did not preach for many years. When pressed for an explanation he generally gave his health as an excuse. Later in life he took up his work again in a far distant, purely agricultural parish, but his sermons were of the simplest kind—exhortations to pity, consideration, gentleness, and counsels as to the common

duties of life. He spent much of his time in visiting his parishioners and in helping them in their difficulties. Mrs. Cardew, as we have said, died before him, but no woman ever had a husband more tender and devoted than hers in these later years. He had changed much, and she knew it, but she did not know exactly how, nor did she know the reason. It was not the kind of change which comes from a new theory or a new principle: it was something deeper. Some men are determined by principles, and others are drawn and directed by a vision or a face. Before Mr. Cardew was set for evermore the face which he saw white and saintly at Chapel Farm that May Sunday morning when death had entered, and it controlled and moulded him with an all-pervading power more subtle and penetrating than that which could have been exercised by theology or ethics.

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